CONTEMPORARY INDIAN LITERATURE

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FOREWORD

I am glad to know that the Sahitya Akademi is bringing out this small volume on Contemporary Indian Literature. The writers give the background of each Indian language, a short account of the growth of its literature and a survey of the present trends. There is a unity of outlook as the writers in different languages derive their inspiration from a common source and face more or less the same kind of experience, emotional and intellectual. Our country has never been insensitive to ideas which come from abroad but gives to all of them its own peculiar turn and imprint.

Literature is a sacred instrument and through the proper use of it we can combat the forces of ignorance and prejudice and foster national unity and world communion. Literature must voice the past, reflect the present and mould the future. Inspired language, *tejomayī vāk*, will help readers to develop a humane and liberal outlook on life, to understand the world in which they live, to understand themselves and plan sensibly for their future.

I hope this small book will give to its readers an account of our travail of mind and heart, our hopes and aspirations.

S. Radhakrishnan

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ASSAMESE LITERATURE

BIRINCHI KUMAR BARUA

Introduction

Assamese is a member of the Indo-Aryan family of languages, and represents the easternmost branch of that family. It is a full-fledged Aryan language in respect of grammatical structure, vocables and syntax. Like Oria and Bengali, Assamese also originated from the Prachya Apabhramsa.

The earliest recorded specimens of Assamese literature have to be traced to the thirteenth century. The specimens are religious or rather derived from Sanskrit and foreshadow the trend of the literature for several centuries. In the fourteenth century Assamese literature was cultivated under the patronage of local potentates and petty chiefs. During this period, the *Ramayana* was translated by Madhabkandali at the request of a Kachari king, Mahamanikya. Episodes from the *Mahabharata* were also rendered into Assamese. Manasa songs and poems glorifying the Snake-goddess Manasa and fables connected with her were also written during this period.

Assamese literature, however, came into prominence with the rise of the neo-Vaishnavite movement preached by Sankardeva in the fifteenth century. The personality of Sankardeva is looked upon by the Assamese as the greatest fact of Assam's cultural and spiritual life in mediaeval times. The religious activities of Sankardeva and his immediate followers did not end in preaching and winning converts. They gave immense impetus to Assamese life and literature, intellect and education. Sankardeva and his followers created an epoch-making body of literature in Assamese. Literature produced by the saint-poets of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was of several kinds: translations of the *Mahabharata*, the *Ramayana* and the *Bhagavata Purana*, adaptations from them and exposition of Vaishnava doctrine, religious songs and plays known respectively as *Bargits* and *Ankiya Nats*.

In the seventeenth century, Assamese literature developed under the patronage of the Ahom kings. The greatest development in Assamese literature during this period is found in the

Buranjis, the chronicles of the Ahom courts written mainly in prose. Commenting on this unique historical literature of this period, Sir G. A. Grierson observes: "The Assamese are justly proud of their national literature. In no department have they been more successful than in a branch of study in which India, as a rule, is curiously deficient. The historical works of the *Buranjis* are numerous and voluminous. A knowledge of *Buranjis* was an indispensable qualification to an Assamese gentleman." (*Linguistic Survey of India*). Under the court patronage many texts both in prose and poetry other than religious were also written in Assamese. They deal with medicine, astronomy, rules of arithmetic, dancing and architecture. Songs and verses on erotic episodes were also compiled and several renderings of the *Gitagovinda* were made.

When the historical and utilitarian literatures were developing under the royal patronage, literature of a different kind was taking its birth under the aegis of the Vaishnavite Satras. This was the *Charitaputhis*, biographies of the Vaishnava saints. This is a type altogether new to our literature. So far literature had been monopolized by the gods and goddesses but now for the first time it took living human beings for its subject both in the *Buranjis* as well as in the *Charitaputhis*.

Modern Period

The last part of the eighteenth and the first part of the nineteenth centuries were dark periods in Assam's history. There were civil dissensions, religious conflicts of the Mowamarias, a militant sect of the Vaishnavas, and finally the invasions of the Burmese (1816-1819, 1824) which led Assam to lose her independence. The British annexed Assam in 1827. At the beginning of the British rule, Assamese was abandoned as a language of school and court (1836-1872). This was, therefore, not a period for cultivation and development of the Assamese language. In the same year (1836) when Assamese lost its official position some members of the American Baptist Mission arrived in Assam. Among other things they brought a printing machine as a part of their missionary equipment. In 1846 the American Missionaries published from Sibsagar a monthly magazine, *Arunodai*, in Assamese. Besides religious pamphlets, the Missionaries published school

text-books on various subjects. Through the efforts of the Missionaries and supported by the opinion of the local leaders of the time, Assamese was restored to its rightful place in 1882. About the literary production of this period, Mr. P. H. Moor, a Missionary scholar and linguist, observed as early as 1907 :

> "The modern literature in Assamese, whether Christian or non-Christian, may be said to be the product of the last sixty years of the nineteenth century. Brown, Bronson and Nidhi Levi are the trio of names that stand out pre-eminently as the founders of Assamese Christian literature."

Literature worthy of the name, however, came in the beginning of the twentieth century. This was through the efforts of young Assamese men who were having western education at that period in Calcutta colleges. While studying in Calcutta, Chandrakumar Agarwalla (1858-1938), Lakshminath Bezbarua (1868-1938), Hem Chandra Goswami (1872-1928), and Padmanath Gohain Barua (1871-1946), all friends, founded in 1889 the monthly journal *Jonaki* (The Fire-fly). This magazine ushered in some of the notes which had characterized the English Romantic movement. The national consciousness which has been said to be the source of the renaissance of modern Assamese literature found in the hands of these writers, and others who moved within their orbit, a many-sided expression. These writers not only composed tender lyrics, inspiring patriotic verses, vigorous descriptive poems, essays touching on a variety of subjects—literary, social and religious—and short stories, plays and novels, but also took keen interest in such activities as historical research and collection of folk-songs and folk-tales.

The Early Romantics

It is from English literature that these poets derived their main inspiration. They are all writers of lyric poems of love and beauty. Of these poets, Lakshminath Bezbarua is the most versatile. He was an excellent poet, a great essayist and a journalist of repute. Poetry in his hands broke all its traditional fetters. He not only struck a new note but introduced fresh forms and diction. Love lyrics, nature poems, narrative verses and ballads are his outstanding contributions. In his patriotic songs and poems, as in

"Amar Janmabhumi", "Mor Desa", "Asam Sangit" and "Bin Baragi", Lakshminath set forth the glories and greatness of the Assamese culture and history with fervent love and admiration. Romantic idealization of the past stimulated Bezbarua's nationalistic sentiment and in his writings, he expressed unbounded confidence in the future progress of Assam—a progress which will not only be political and material but aesthetic and moral as well.

Another writer of patriotic verse is Kamalakanta Bhattacharya. Kamalakanta's patriotism was not confined to rousing a forgetful and sleeping nation to the glories of their past culture but went on to impress on them the need of a democratic administration in the country. Two notable collections of Kamalakanta's poems are the *Chinta* (Burning Thoughts) and the *Chintataranga* (Waves of Thoughts). Absence of freedom and the accompanying ills of the country were what he felt deeply.

Chandrakumar Agarwalla wrote a number of delicate verses now included in *Pratima* (Image) and *Bin Baragi* (The Minstrel with the Lute) which reveal influences of the French philosopher August Comte and of the Vaishnava idea of the worship of humanity. Durgeswar Sarma and Nilmani Phukan are two other poets of spiritual ideas. A philosophic poet, Durgeswar Sarma's preoccupation is life and the godhead, and the restless craving of the soul for self-realization. Nilmani Phukan's poems have more ideas than feeling. His *Manasi* (Intellectual Beauty) reveals the thirst for beauty that the poet has, and his *Sandhani* (The Quest) is in a similar manner an immortal quest for truth and beauty. Phukan was imprisoned in 1942 for taking part in the August revolution, and his experiences there have been incorporated in *Jinjiri* (The Shackles).

Hiteswar Barbarua studied English literature and was much influenced by Shakespeare, Wordsworth and Milton. To him we owe blank verse, sonnet and elegy. For models of blank verse Hiteswar Barbarua went beyond the example of Michael Madhusudhan Datta and tapped Shakespearean resources. Among his Kayyas are the historical *Kamatapur Dhvamsa* (1912) and the *Yuddha Ksetrat Ahom Ramani* (An Ahom Heroine in the Battlefield). Both are from Ahom history, and these Kavyas are full of heroic sentiments. Barbarua's vigorous lines on love of the fatherland have passed almost into proverbs in Assamese :

He who lays down his life in the battlefield
Fighting for the freedom of his fatherland,
Gets bliss after death.
Death is in his case an eternal rest,
Full of happiness , on the lap of the Mother of the Universe,
Fire is sweet moonlight to him,
The bed of clay is a bed of flowers,
And the piercing spears falling on his body
Are but floral showers over him.

Another interesting poet of this period is Ambikagiri Roychaudhury. Ambikagiri has made himself known as a poet, singer, musical composer, journalist, a political agitator and patriot. In his younger days he composed delicate love lyrics. His symbolic Kavya *Tumi* (Thou), first published in 1915 and couched in ten-syllabled tripping lines, is a poem of unsurpassed delicacy, sweet cadence and soft music. In content *Tumi* is the poet's vision of the beautiful and super-sensuous images. In later life, however, due to close association with the freedom movement and imprisonment for that cause, his outlook on life and poetry greatly changed. Now Ambikagiri mostly composes stirring political poems.

One of the most significant poets of this period is Raghunath Chaudhary, commonly known as *Bihagi-Kavi* (the Bird-Poet). His first collection of poems, the *Sadari* (The Darling) had already betrayed a preference, on the part of the poet, for birds and flowers. This was followed by two other long poems published separately, namely the *Keteki* (the Indian Nightingale) and the *Dahi-katara* (Wag-tail). In these two poems, the bird-theme has firmly established itself in the mind of the poet. The central idea of his *Keteki* is the coming of a new birth to the earth at the advent of the bird. The song of the Keteki is some 'unbodied joy', a delightful symphony of perfection unknown to man. The poet here exploits the theme to describe the beauties of Nature that have appealed to him and in this description the works of Kalidasa had considerable influence over him.

In Jatindranath Duara[1] the romantic morbidity of a non-ethical pessimism finds the fullest expression. His writings are the records of his personal feeling, his contradictory moods, his

[1]His book, *Banaphul,* was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Prize for the most outstanding Assamese book published since Independence.—*Ed.*

fugitive love and his sentimental despair. Duara has given to Assamese poetry a wealth of verbal and metrical beauty and a rich and fresh harvest of natural imagery. Many of his imageries are drawn from river, boat, and boatman. One of the earliest works of Jatindranath was *Omartirtha* (1926), an exquisite and delicate rendering of Khayyam's *Rubaiyat*. He is also well known for his prose-poems (*Kathakavita*) in which he seems to be the only successful writer in the language.

In the poems of Ratnakanta Barkakati tender sentiments of earthly love have found an expression of great charm and melody. Ratnakanta seems to have benefited a little from the study of Tagore, and this is primarily in the field of metre. In metre, however, Devakanta Barua wrought a miracle in Assamese poetry. Devakanta casts his love poems into the mould of dramatic monologue, such as was practised by Robert Browning.

Dimbeswar Neog and Binanda Chandra Barua wrote a series of powerful patriotic verses. They mostly write of the glorious past of Assam as contrasted with her precarious present. If they rake the past, it is only to find courage, inspiration and light for the present and the future. They remember the noble sons and daughters of the past, and invite the rising generation to emulate their examples, break down the shackles of foreign rule and misery, and rear up a prosperous Assam, advanced in all spheres of life. Language, literature, culture, economic life—everything has got to be revitalized. Patriotic poetry of the more firy kind, however, made its appearance in the verse of Prasannalal Choudhury.

Many women writers wielded the pen during this half century. Of them Nalinibala Devi is the most gifted. A mystic poetess, Nalinibala has an undefined restlessness, a craving for something which eludes definition. The same central theme informs all her three poetical collections—the *Sandhiyar Sur* (The Music of Sunset), the *Saponar Sur* (The Music of Dreamland), and the *Parashmani* (The Talisman). Running through all her poems, is the deep feeling of a heart lacerated by the sorrow and suffering of life. Dharmeswari Devi Baruani is another noted devotional poetess. Dharmeswari has two published collections of poems, *Phular Sarai* (Basket of Flowers) and *Pranar Parash* (The Touch of a Soul). Both are expressions of a profound faith in pantheism and the desire of the individual soul to get merged into the uni-

versal soul. Among the host of young women writers of today, both in prose and verse, Suprabha Goswami, Preeti Barua, Lakshahira Das, Suchibrata Roy Choudhury deserve mention.

Post-War Verse

Till the last World War, the dominant themes in Assamese poetry were love, both divine and human, Nature and patriotism. Since then our poets, mostly younger ones, have become more and more acquainted with socialist and Marxian doctrines. They now do not consider life to be simple and smooth-sailing but very much complicated and full of conflicting problems. Inevitably, their poems deal with incongruities; and various shades of life, both in its humour and irony, are fused in a harmonious way even in their serious poems. These young poets, are further looking to the theory and technique of the European symbolists to meet their new requirements. A few of them are influenced by T. S. Eliot and the modern Bengali poets, Buddhadeva Bose, Jivanananda Das, Amiya Chakravarty and others: for, many of these Assamese writers had either their college education at Calcutta or have studied Bengali poetry with deep sympathy. These poets in their writings refer to capitalist exploitation, class-conflict and the need for a quick change in the order of things. Complicated problems of sex arising out of a new social order and intricacies of the sub-conscious mind also appear in this new poetry in strange diction and unfamiliar language. Moreover, for this new vocabulary, they have drawn upon science and psychology for many expressions. Therefore, not only the content but even the forms of this new poetry is very new. These poets have even abandoned the conventional poetic form and technique and adopted free verse and free variations in verse form as well. Their imagery is new and where traditional images are used, they are interpreted in an unusual way.

Of these writers, Hem Barua may claim the credit of taking the initiative in this type of symbolic poetry. Barua's imageries are novel and involve ironic contrasts, the technique abrupt and uncommon. Navakanta Barua has also made experiments in this form. His *He Aranya He Mahanagar* written in a language curiously mixed with ordinary speech and stiff Sanskrit words and new poetic technique is juxtaposed with complicated images.

A common rhetorical device both of Navakanta Barua and Mahendra Bora is to incorporate quotations from English, Sanskrit, and Assamese, often from a very common or an obscure and unsuspected source, and the lines that follow usually become a commentary on the quotation.

It should be noted that journalism has greatly assisted the development of this new poetry, particularly through the monthly magazine, the *Ramdhanu* (The Rainbow), round which nearly all young writers of the day gather as family members. As many of these young poets look on literature as vehicle for political and social discussion and for propaganda in an anarchic and irregular form, their verses hardly rise above journalism. The most regrettable state of affairs in modern Assamese poetry is that while the older poets have practically ceased to write, the younger poets are still in the experimental stage. New poetry in the true sense is still to be born in Assamese.

Drama

Assamese has a rich tradition both in drama and theatre. The *Ankiya Nat*, the mediaeval dramatic composition, even today holds sway as popular entertainment in our villages. But drama in the modern sense is an importation from the West. The earliest composers of drama in western form in Assamese are Gunabhiram Barua, Hemchandra Barua and Rudraram Bardoloi. But this form of art reached its first perfection in the hands of Lakshminath Bezbarua and Padmanath Gohain Barua. In Bezbarua's plays patriotic sentiments became predominant. In *Chakradhvaja Sinha* he portrays a glorious chapter of Assam's history. This play has for its theme the reign of the Ahom king Chakradhvaja Sinha (1663-1669) during whose time successive Muhammedan invasions of Assam were routed and defeated under the able generalship of Lachit Bar Phukan. *Beli-mar* (Sunset), which has for its theme the Burmese invasion of Assam (1816), not only depicts the contemporary chain of events but also exhales the very atmosphere of the decadence of the Ahom court that led to the loss of Assam's independence. In another historical play, *Jaymati*, not only is history presented but a sense of romantic wonder is woven around the character of Dalimi, an unsophisticated Naga damsel. Lakshminath's farces are full of mocking and hilarious laughter.

Padmanath Gohain Barua is one of our great writers both of prose and verse. He wrote plays on themes both historical and puranic and composed three farces. His four dramas, *Jaymati* (1900), *Gadadhar* (1907), *Sadhani* (1911) and *Lachit Phukan* (1915), are based on Ahom history. In plot development the dramatist has in these plays paid scant attention to economy nor shown any new attitude or light. Unnecessary sentimentality, description of occult things, love of Nature, purposeless dialogues and irrelevant comic scenes have not contributed much towards the organic growth of plots in these historical dramas. Gohain Barua has, however, shown great skill in depicting the common people and rustic scenes; and in the *Gaoburah* (The Village Headman) he has attained distinction. This farce, *Gaoburah*, gives a realistic picture of British administration in the closing decade of the nineteenth century. Like Dinabandhu Mitra's Bengali drama, *Nila Darpan*, the *Gaoburah* is a play with a set purpose and is a most notable contribution to Assamese dramatic literature of the early part of this century. The drama depicts the miserable life of a village headman who held the responsible, burdensome and honorary office of a headman. His own affairs came to the verge of ruin due to extreme official preoccupation and he received not only no reward but actually insult and humiliation at the hands of all big and small government officers of the inspecting line.

Chandradhar Barua is another well-known playwright. His two Puranic dramas, *Meghnad-Vadh* (1904) and *Tilottama Sambhava* are in blank verse, and deal respectively with the killing of Indrajit, and the mutual destruction of the two demons Sunda and Upa-Sunda in their rivalry for the hand of Tilottama. In plot development and characterization, both the dramas disclose influence of Michael Madhusudhan Datta. In his farce *Bhagya Parikshya* (Fate Decided), a decision is sought, in a lighter vein, with regard to the relative merit of fate and riches. In this farce, the author has displayed much skill in depicting varied pictures of rural life in appropriate settings and in the every-day speech of the people. It should also be noted that many playwrights of the period were more successful in farces than in serious dramas. Among these farces, Mitradeva Mahanta's *Biya Biparyaya* and *Kukurikanar Athmangala* won considerable success for their amusing subject-matter, enjoyable dialogue and comic scenes.

Historical plays in an era of pan-Indian national movement for freedom made their appearance in large numbers and episodes from Assam's history proved a ready and rich store for themes. Nakul Chandra Bhuyan's *Badan Barphukan*, Prasannalal Choudhury's *Nilambar*, Sailadhar Rajkhowa's *Svargadeo Pratap Singh*, and Daibachandra Talukdar's *Bhaskar Varman* are a few of the inspiring historical plays produced during the early part of the century. In *Bhaskar Varman*, Talukdar has presented a truly noble character, brave and learned, and made the historical background vivid and vital. Atulchandra Hazarika who distinguished himself by writing a dozen mythological plays has also handled successfully Indian historical themes in his *Kanauj Kuwari* and *Chatrapati Sivaji*. It must be noted that Atulchandra Hazarika wrote dramas to meet the demand of the Assamese stage which, before he started writing, was practically monopolized by the works of Bengali authors. Hazarika liquidated this dependence.

Since independence, historical plays of revolutionary kind and having more patriotic bias have come to be written. Chandrakanta Phookan's *Piyali Phukan* and Prabin Phukan's *Maniram Dewan* depict the life of two nineteenth century patriots who made secret plots to free the country by driving out the British; unfortunately both of them were detected and hanged without any trial. Surendranath Saikia's *Kushal Kowar*, a drama on the life of Kushal Kowar, a martyr of 1942 August Movement, has also earned considerable success.

Plays of a romantic type were written by Kamalananda Bhattacharya (*Naga Kowar*) and Jyoti Prasad Agarwala (*Sonit Kuwari* and *Karengar Ligiri*). Jyoti Prasad Agarwala, the most notable figure in the history of modern Assamese drama and stage, is a patriot and first-rate poet besides being a lyrical playwright. Jyoti Prasad had his training in Europe, and as a consequence there is much foreign influence in his songs, tunes and dramatic technique.

The Novel

Before the twentieth century Assamese literature had very few novels worth the name. The novel as a full-fledged work of creative imagination in prose was born at the hands of Rajanikanta Bardoloi. Rajanikanta tapped themes mainly from the *Buranjis*.

But his first novel *Mirijiyari* (Miri Maid) written in 1895 is not historical. The novel recounts the love of a Miri lad and a Miri girl and the action is set on the bank of the Subansiri river which is not a passive background to the tragic human story but an active participator in it. This concern for tribal life and the enlivening objects of nature seem to be unusual in early modern Assamese literature. Two other novels of Bardoloi, also centring on a love motive, are *Manomati* (1900) and *Rahadai Ligiri* (1930), both set against the background of the Burmese invasions of Assam. A third work, *Danduwa Droh*, is woven around a political movement of the eighteenth century. Bardoloi admits in the preface to this novel (1909) that the works of Walter Scott and Bankimchandra Chatterjee moved him to appreciate the beauty of the hills and dales of his own land and to write novels on themes culled from Assam's history. A concern for the heroism of the people in the days gone by and the merits of the Vaishnavism current in the land give occasionally to Bardoloi's work a tract-like tone, but story-telling is the author's prime objective and the novels have been able to retain their hold on the public. Padmanath Gohain Barua's *Lahari* and *Bhanumati*, both centring round love themes, have the background of Ahom days. Though placed against historical settings, neither novel deals with anything particularly historical as such. Daibachandra Talukdar and Dandinath Kalita in their novels have made an attempt to explore the relationship of man and woman and in this respect they went a little farther than Rajanikanta Bardoloi. Talukdar held up Gandhian ideas in *Adarshapith* (Ideal Land); in Kalita's *Sadhana* also a similar idealistic note is felt.

The output of fiction in Assamese is, however, limited and it did not reach maturity till the last decade. In recent years, the standard has gone up and several new tendencies have marked our novels. From the old romantic they have now gone to the realistic and psycho-analytic types. The present-day fiction-writers have turned their eyes on those who are neglected by society, and try to assess their social values. One of these novels on the rural life of Assam, namely *Jivanar Batat* (Highway of Life) has received wide recognition for its true portrayal of rural life. Hitesh Deka's *Ajir Manuh* (Man of the Age), Adyanath Sarma's *Jivanar Tin Adhyay* (Three Chapters of Life), Chandrakanta Gogoi's *Sonar Nangal* (The Golden Plough),

Govinda Mahanta's *Krishakar Nati* (The Cultivator's Descendants) are some of the outstanding novels of social study. Woven round a love story, Navakanta Barua's *Kapilipariya Sadhu* depicts the unfortunate tale of the people dwelling on the bank of the river Kapili, which changes its course whimsically every year. In *Dawar Aru Nai* (Clouds No More) Jogesh Das portrays the disruptive effects of the last World War upon ethics, morals and manners of our society. Gifted with talent as a story-teller, Birendrakumar Bhattacharya in his *Rajpathe Ringiyai* (Call of the Highway) depicts the life of a revolutionary young man who wants to set right the 'wrongs' of the society. The entire approach of the author is intellectual and the treatment psychological.

Some other psychological novels produced during the recent years have also attained recognition for their technique of construction, depiction of subconscious motives and urges of the human heart. Praphulladatta Goswami's *Keca Patar Kapani* (Quivering Foliage) describes the ideological unrest of a young man, and Radhika Mohan Goswami's *Chaknaiya* (The Vortex) portrays the life of a frustrated young man who could not adjust himself to the present-day society.

Short Story

The short story developed under the influence of the West. Lakshminath Bezbarua was the first to raise the short story into the higher realm of art. He was an editor all his life and so learnt to view the story from the stand-point of an editor. He who has only a little space at his disposal must condense the size and language of the tale. All of Bezbarua's stories (now collected in three books, *Sadhukathar Kuki*, *Jonbiri*, *Surabhi*) depict fragments of life, offer snatches of experience and momentary impressions. He and Saratchandra Goswami had woven local colours in their tales and realism became their chief characteristic. They were, however, inhibited in their expression by middle-class complexes, though the deep human feelings, pathos and humour were not beyond their range. A deep social consciousness was seen in the work of Nagendranarayan Choudhury and Trailokyanath Goswami. Goswami's two collections—*Aruna* and the *Marichika* (Mirage) contain stories which are veritable slices from life around us. The story 'Jaraja' included in the *Aruna* is one of considerable power, and depicts the cruel scorn

and social tyranny to which Ratan, born out of wedlock, is subjected. In another story, the 'Bidhava' (Widow), the writer depicts the misery and social oppression from which a mother and her daughter, both widows, suffer. The stories of the *Marichika* are devoted largely to the ills which came in the wake of the Second World War. Goswami's *Jiya Manuh* (Living Man) is a short novel devoted to the same topic of dwindling social morality that the War brought about, and the reforms that are necessary. In Mahi Bora's and Lakshminath Phukan's stories Assamese humour came out at its best and in Haliram Deka's stories an ironical outlook was a distinctive feature.

Lakshminath Sarma wrote the most modern type of short stories in Assamese. In his stories for the first time woman and her emotions find a place. He was succeeded by a host of other writers who also wrote about modern women and their love affairs. They were Bina Barua, Rama Das and others. Bina Barua's *Pat-Parivartan* (Change of Scene) is a collection of stories mostly on the life of college girls and their temporary love affairs of the sentimental variety. He has written also on rural life, and the leading story, the 'Aghonibai' included in the collection of rural stories bearing that name, is one of considerable strength, depicting the village woman Aghonibai who is ever helpful to other villagers and her pathetic lot. It contains a rich store of pictures of rural life daintily done. What attracts readers to Rama Das is his perfect craftsmanship and narrative technique as a writer of short stories. Vividness of description, charm of dialogue, solidity of thought, and an extraordinary capacity to express fine differences of feelings in language make his short stories some of the very best we have in Assamese. Most of his stories deal with departures from the aberrations of love usually approved by society, and to this task the writer has brought psycho-analysis and sympathy. This is evident in such stories as *Setu Bandhon* (The Gulf Bridged), *Barasa Jetiya Name* (When Summer Comes), etc. Dinanath Sarma's two novels *Usha* and *Sangram* have gained some popularity, but the author is more well known for his number of short stories now included in *Dulal* (1952), *Akalsariya* (1953), *Kowa Bhaturiya Othar Talat* (1952) and *Kalpana Aru Bastava.* Most of Sarma's stories are on love themes and depict ugly and unfaithful life, particularly of women. His *Sowaran* very realistically describes the unsatiated

love of a newly wedded wife and probes deeply into the complexity of a woman's mind. His interests are limited, themes stereotyped and comparatively narrow.

Those short story writers who wrote after Lakshmìdhar Sarma and up to the Second World War were influenced mainly by Freud and were stimulated by sex interest due to the study of Continental authors. Most of these writers accepted illegitimate love-romance and unrestricted sex attraction without hesitation as if these were as real as the other facts of life. Hence in describing naked love, they felt no scruple or doubt or delicacy. It would seem as if they wanted a new assessment of the primal relationship of man and woman in the new social and individual background.

After the Second World War, the short story, like poetry, plays and novels, has undergone a change. The short story today is pre-occupied with the problems of the middle class, the labourers and the peasants. The new social and economic environment, the incongruities, the inequalities of opportunities—these have become the staple of the short story of today. It is concerned with the social, political and moral upheaval brought about by the Second World War and is trying to assess the new values. It contrasts the contentment of peasant life of the earlier social order with the discontent and misery, tyranny and exploitation, resentment and hatred of labour in the new social order. Of these writers Abdul Malik has achieved considerable distinction both for his extraordinary plot-construction and entertaining language. Jogesh Das, Birendrakumar Bhattacharya, Hemen Bargohain, Bhabendranath Saikia and others have equally in many ways added colour and variety to our modern short story.

Essay

The prose which was fairly mature in the nineteenth century has since developed into the essay. The personal type of essay was established by Lakshminath Bezbarua. He is one of the best miscellaneous prose writers, an essayist of rare charm and a witty and tolerant critic. Like Chesterton, Bezbarua succeeded in inventing a form half-way between the essay and the short story. It is this that gives his essays their amusing quality, turning multitudes of homely topics and daily trifles into material for

laughter. He created in his essays the character of Kripabar Barbarua, in imitation of Sir Roger de Coverley. Assamese life and manners are typified in Kripabar's idiosyncrasies. The delightful series of essays under the caption *Barbaruar Bhavar Burburani*, meaning "Barbarua's Bubbles of Thought" are well known in Assamese literature. They touch upon topical themes for the most part, making fun of the hollow men and institutions of the country. As they are flavoured with superior humour, a keen power of observation brought to bear on contemporary life and problems and written in a witty style, they are amusingly appealing. This personal type of essay seems to have found its successful votary in Haliram Deka and Hem Chandra Barua.

Though Satyanath Bora in his contemporary social sketches included in *Kendra Sabha* followed Bezbarua he, however, finally came out as a serious prose-writer of merit. Satyanath's essays in *Sarathi* (The Guide) and *Chintakali* (Buds of Thought) are thoughtful and close-knit compositions; and Satyanath through these essays standardized the language, rehabilitated the grammar and idiom and chastened the prose style. Another prose writer of eminence is Banikanta Kakati. As a man of wide knowledge, interest and scholarship, Banikanta became a brilliant mind of the province. His pen was keen and hard as his intellect. Kakati produced a series of learned and authoritative essays on Assamese language and literature in a chiselled and clear style which will adorn our literature for all time.

It is an undeniable fact that English education gave an incentive to the growth of nationalism and stimulated pride in our own language, culture and history. As a result many scholars delved deep into the study of past history and literature of Assam and harvested a good crop in historical essays. Hemchandra Goswami's antiquarian researches were recorded in splendid prose. Suryakumar Bhuyan's historical writings have gone very deeply into the by-ways of Ahom history. Bhuyan is our noted word-reviver and in his historical writings many old and obsolete words and expressions from the old Assamese chronicles (*Buranjis*) are ably introduced. Benudhar Sarma also writes historical essays in an entertaining manner. Sarma possesses an individuality in his style and has deep love for pure Assamese vocables. Suryakumar Bhuyan has devoted his life in editing and publishing numerous valuable old Assamese texts. He is success-

fully followed by Harinarayan Datta Barua, Kaliram Medhi, Birinchi Kumar Barua, Upendra Chandra Lekharu, Maheswar Neog, Satyendranath Sarma and many others. These scholars have critically edited a large number of old texts on varied subjects. Through them they have ascertained the growth and development of the Assamese language and have discovered the continuity of the genius of the Assamese people. Interest in cultural and folk-life of the Assamese people was first shown by Lakshminath Bezbarua and Nakul Chandra Bhuyan in their collections of folk-tales and songs. In recent years, there have come out valuable and impressive writings on cultural and historical subjects. The number and variety of literary products of the last half century assure us firmly that the tradition of literature in Assamese contains the seed of a greater and fuller cultural heritage in the future.

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BENGALI LITERATURE

KAZI ABDUL WADUD

ANTECEDENTS

According to competent scholars Bengali originated, along with such other languages as Assamese, Oriya and Maithili, from Eastern Prakrit, which was an Indian offshoot of the great family of Indo-European languages. In the distinctive shape it took, in due course it absorbed, obviously enough, a considerable amount of non-Aryan elements in respect of both vocabulary and ideas and imagery.

The earliest specimens of its literature, known so far, are the 'Charya' songs which Mahamahopadhyaya Haraprasad Shastri, a well-known Indologist, discovered in the State Library of Nepal and published in 1916. Their age is generally considered to be 1000 A.D.—1200 A.D., though some would push it as far back as the eighth century. These songs are not, strictly speaking, literary compositions, but are rather symbolic directives by the masters of a particular school of Mahayana (Great Vehicle) Buddhism for the guidance of their followers in Yogic discipline. They bear strange similarities with the songs of our nineteenth century Bauls (mystic vagrants) of whom Tagore spoke in his Hibbert Lectures on Religion of Man.

Bengal which was practically a Buddhist land turned during the reign of the Sen Kings (1000 A.D.—1200 A.D.) into a predominantly Hindu land. In one of our old epic-like narrations, *Sunya Purana* by name, there are lines in which persecution of Buddhists by Brahmin revivalists and the former's looking upon the Turkish conquerors of the day as their deliverers, are alleged. The vast Muhammedan population of Bengal is, for such reasons, considered to have originated, along with the Hindus, from the old Buddhist stocks.

Of the old Bengali long poems *Chandi Mangal* by Mukundaram Chakravarty (he is principally known by his title of Kavikankan) of the early sixteenth century or thereabout is highly distinctive for its faithful and concrete presentation of men and women and manners and events of his time. It is, as the name implies, an account, rather discursive and uninspiring, of how the worship

of the goddess Chandi came into vogue here below; but with all these handicaps it is really epical in the variety of human interests it reflects.

After the *Chandi Mangal*, or along with it, are to be mentioned the Vaishnava lyrics, i.e. songs on the love of Radha and Krishna, by Vidyapati, Chandidas, Jnanadas, and Govindadas, some of which are things of beauty, indeed, not only for Bengali readers but for all people who prize true and effective words.[1] They—I mean the best of these songs—embody rare ecstasies of love and devotion and may be compared with the best love lyrics, human or divine, in any well-known literature. It is noteworthy that the personality of the great Chaitanya inspired the age. Of his innumerable biographical accounts, two, one by Brindabandas and the other by Krishnadas Kaviraj, are memorable works.

After the achievements of the Vaishnavas are to be mentioned the *Ramayana* by Krittivas and the *Mahabharata* by Kashiramdas. They may roughly be placed in the sixteenth century—the former at its beginning and the latter at its end. These two old epics are people's books indeed, remarkable even now for their smooth-gliding verses, their simple and deep pathos, and their great ethical values.

The seventeenth century gave us two Muhammedan poets of power—Daulat Kazi and Syed Alaol—who worked under the patronage of the Mug Kings of Arakan and their Muhammedan nobles. Daulat Kazi had considerable promise but died comparatively young; Alaol lived up to a good old age and combined with his poetical gifts wide scholarship. Both of them are considered to have rendered distinctive service to Bengali literature by their insistence on the treatment of secular love and exploits when the atmosphere was too full of the loves and exploits of gods and goddesses, not always edifying.

In their wake came Bharatchandra of the eighteenth century. He was a more refined artist and enjoyed wide popularity for nearly a century. But with all his brilliance and cleverness he lacked in the sense of values. He flourished in an age which was decadent. Close on the heels of Bharatchandra came Ramprosad. He tried for a time to write in imitation of Bharatchandra, but was not so successful. His religious lyrics, celebrating the mother-

[1]A selection of these lyrics has been published by Sahitya Akademi (*Vaishnav Padavali*, edited with an Introduction by Dr. Sukumar Sen).—*Ed.*

love of the goddess Kali, were of a higher order and have endeared him greatly to almost all classes of Bengalis.

Nineteenth Century

Our nineteenth century opened with the power and prestige of the British well established and well recognized. It was essentially an age of transition. Its representative poet of the first half of the century was Ishwar Gupta. He lacked in higher poetic gifts but was a keen-sighted observer of things and events around him and presented them in piquant verse. He was justly popular, and three of the harbingers of the modern age in our literature—Rangalal, Dinabandhu, and Bankimchandra—had their early upbringing under him.

Mention should here be made of our rich traditional folk-lore and folk-songs, some of which are now available in an English version[2]. They undoubtedly came from bygone ages, though their garb has changed considerably in course of transition. Their uncommon literary qualities have been recognized even outside India.

There was no Bengali prose literature worth the name previous to the nineteenth century. At its beginning the Fort William College was established and William Carey and Mrityunjoy Vidyalankar tried to give shape to Bengali prose by writing text-books for the use of the civilians who received training in it. The endeavour was fruitful to some extent. But the first really powerful Bengali prose came from the pen of Raja Rammohun Roy in the pamphlets he published advocating thorough-going reforms in religion, morals, and social practices. His was a rare mind—keen, virile and well-poised; but he was in advance of his time and paid the penalty of his greatness by being ignored by his people except by those gifted Bengalis of the nineteenth century who profited by his example and wisdom and furthered the progress of the country in their own ways. In fact, it was mainly Rammohun's ideas and endeavours that were responsible for the Renaissance in Bengali in the nineteenth century—an outstanding event in the British period of our history. Rabindranath, our greatest exponent of modern culture, owed immensely to Rammohun's ideas.

[2]Mymensingh Ballads and East Bengal Ballads, published by Calcutta University.

A thorough-going reformer, Rammohun advocated far-reaching reforms in the educational system of the country as well. The Hindu College of the day (established in 1817), though it taught English language and literature and some modern sciences, did not come up to his expectation as it had no provision for moral education and the study of Indian languages and philosophy. The Hindu College, however, functioned effectively in its own way, and soon produced a band of young thinkers known as 'Young Bengal' for whom the reforms as exemplified in the lives of the Rammohunites of the day were unsatisfactory and too dilatory. They yearned for a speedy and almost wholesale replacement of things Oriental by things Western. The best of both the groups were, however, admirably open-hearted, sturdy in character and earnest patriots, in their divergent ways of course. Bengali prose made, before long, further headway in the hands of some able and devoted Rammohunites of the 'Tattvabodhini' School,[3] but modern Bengali literature, modern in content as well as in form, originated in the camp of the Young Bengal. Michael Madhusudan Dutt, a front-rank Young Bengal of his time, who long dreamt of fame through the writing of English verse and who embraced Christianity and mastered a number of European languages, modern as well as ancient (to have, so it seems, no let or hindrance in his path of progress), ended by becoming the first great poet of modern Bengali literature, indeed, its august founder. He flung, as it were, a bridge across the gulf that had divided so long our land from Europe and bound them firmly. Europe was no longer alien to us but was, through his genius, revealed to be our own kith and kin, unknown so long. It was a great gain indeed for the renascent spirit of Bengal, though it was not without danger for those who were not well-equipped. Bankimchandra Chattopadhyaya, another Young Bengal of a later date, who wrote an English novel named *Rajmohun's Wife* at the outset of his literary career, turned round and produced Bengali novels of power in quick succession, and was in a few years acclaimed the leading *litterateur* of his time—the first great writer of modern Bengali prose.

In his later years, however, Bankimchandra turned to the problem of national reconstruction. It was an age of Hindu

[3]Akshoy Kumar Datta, Iswarchandra Vidyasagar and Maharshi Devendranath Tagore were, as is well-known, the leaders of this School.

nationalism born by way of a number of reactions, the chief of which were: the British rulers' stubborn unwillingness to recognize the growing aspirations of the educated Hindus and the latter's wounded and accentuated sense of self-respect and self-dependence in this predicament; the influence of Todd's romantic *Annals of Rajasthan* on their patriotic susceptibilities; the birth of the national theatre mostly presenting melodramas with their parade of sentimental patriotism; and the homage paid to hoary Hindu religion and metaphysics by Madame Blavatsky, the theosophist, and by other European scholars. Bankimchandra was not, generally speaking, a soft-headed thinker. But somehow he yielded to the seductions of romantic patriotism, or rather the romantic racialism of the age. His immediate success as a patriot and Hindu nationalist was immense. But in reality he undid largely what was best in him. The serious drawbacks of the novels he penned towards the end of his life, even though they were not wholly without merit, and his inability to face the complex national problems of the country in his day, point to his unhappy position.[4] But though there was some confusion in his thought, his love for the motherland and anguish for her fallen condition were supremely genuine and acted for a time at least as a great creative force in the national life. The poets Hemchandra and Nobinchandra who were inspired more or less by Bankimchandra's ideas of national resurgence rose to great fame in their days; they however suffered a setback subsequently. Rameshchandra Dutta, the renowned civilian, was another distinguished follower of Bankimchandra. He wrote a number of Bengali novels, both historical and social, but is now chiefly remembered as an economist. The poets Biharilal Chakravarty and Surendranath Majumder of the same age were comparatively less known in their days, but rose higher gradually for their intrinsic literary worth. Biharilal was a great lover of nature and of his people, and was almost severely simple in his ways. He influenced the youthful Rabindranath substantially.

It was in this atmosphere of Hindu nationalism that

[4] *Vide* Bankimchandra's remarks on the cultural position of the Mussalmans of Bengal in his *Dharmatattva*. *Vide* particularly his *Bangadesher Krishak* in which he diagnosed the sorry plight of the peasants admirably but failed hopelessly in respect of suggesting any remedy because he did not want to disturb the national economy.

Rabindranath grew up. But he was not affected by it in any marked degree for two principal reasons; firstly, from his boyhood he was devoted to poetry—to the works of Kalidasa, Jayadeva and the Vaishnava poets, on the one hand, and to those of Byron, Shelley, Wordsworth, Keats and Browning on the other; secondly, the great family to which he belonged was as deeply nationalist as self-respecting, and avoided ostentation. The poet Biharilal Chakravarty deepened these influences in the youthful poet.

Rabindranath grew up chiefly as a poet of nature with a liberal endowment of intellectual alertness and kindly disposition. He became a full-bloomed poet of the art for art's sake school with complete mastery over his art when he was twenty-six, and went on producing enthralling lyrics, playlets, short stories and essays in abundance for a period of about eight years, at the end of which he felt an urge to be more earnest—to dive deeper into the truth of life—with the result that to his deep love of nature was now added a deep yearning towards God, in other words, towards heightened awareness of truth and goodness. Patriotism and nationalism had now an added significance for him: he became, with his concern for the self-oblivious Hindu, practically a Hindu nationalist, with only this difference with Bankimchandra and his school that his attention was focused not on the Hindu way that was in vogue, but on the ennobling life-views of the Upanishads and of the Buddha. He felt that his countrymen must live anew that life of high purpose, must not be overwhelmed by Europe with her proclivity to power and self-indulgence, if they meant to start life afresh. Such was Rabindranath in 1900 when he completed the fortieth year of his life. He had assumed by that time the stature of a great poet by every test, and his earnestness promised further greatness ahead of him. But he was not widely popular in his own province, and was almost unknown beyond it.

Twentieth Century

The twentieth century in our literature opened with Rabindranath's *Naivedya*, a collection of 100 poems, mostly close-knit sonnets embodying the poet's consciousness of the living God, of the sacredness of the everyday conduct of life, and of the pressing duties towards his unfortunate motherland, unfortunate

in her two-fold thraldom—to the boastful foreign conqueror on the one hand and to the unreason and listlessness of her sons on the other. It was a powerful book indeed and is to be classed among the very best of Tagore's gifts to his nation and to humanity. It was in this book that he foretold the disaster that awaited the chauvinistic West.[5] It is also to be noted that the poems that came in its wake won for him world recognition in 1913.

The Partition of Bengal by Lord Curzon came about in 1905 and found Bengal wonderfully unyielding. The spiritual aspect of that mighty resistance was reflected in Rabindranath in all its glory, and his songs and speeches inspired the people of Bengal in an unprecedented way. He spoke of self-help in every aspect of the national life, and not a word of hatred for the Britisher. Those songs and speeches have not lost their savour even now, for the good reason that they were not inspired by mere patriotism but by patriotism charged with God-consciousness, in other words, by patriotism charged with the supreme sense of responsibility to truth and fellowmen. Like all great artists Rabindranath has also drawn interesting and memorable men and women, but his greatest achievement is that he succeeded in drawing, or rather revealing in his successive writings, himself—that wonderfully sensitive consciousness ever developing under the inspiration of truth and joy of life.

The Boycott and Swadeshi called forth by the Partition could not be maintained at the level that would gladden Rabindranath's heart; on the contrary, it veered off to terrorism which he could never countenance. His connection with the movement naturally broke off. The catastrophe gnawed his heart but deepened his spiritual consciousness. His Hindu or Indian nationalism had been broadening ever since he came into close contact with the Swadeshi movement, because he was not slow to perceive the debasing effect of every type of superiority complex and self-righteousness however innocent or justified they might appear. Through the suffering was effected a thorough cleansing, so to say, of his nationalism which henceforward became synonymous with internationalism. He was, as was to be expected, misunder-

[5]The ending couplet in a sonnet runs thus:
Behold Nationalism rushing headlong to Death
With its cargo of self-aggrandisement towards submerged rocks.

stood. But he was convinced that his God left for him no other course—that true internationalism was no enemy of genuine national aspirations, rather, it was the only basis on which they could take their rightful stand. The strength of his conviction was realized by the world a few years later when he delivered his lectures on Nationalism in Japan and America. Subsequent world events have proved that his was a true soul making no mistake about the peculiar ills of his age.

Rabindranath, we have seen, was an eminent poet with a substantial body of writings when the twentieth century set in, but was not known so widely. But though not so much in vogue he had even then a body of friends and followers who admired him deeply and were aware of his uncommon worth. His active participation in the Swadeshi movement had made him widely known and secured for him a large body of literary followers most of whom wrote idealizing the placid life of Bengal which, however wanting in material resources, was not, in their eyes, wanting in things of the spirit. These writers lacked depth of thought and sentiment and so for all their imitation of the craftsmanship of Tagore could write only readable poems. Of the poets contemporaneous with Rabindranath, Debendranath Sen, Akshoy Kumar Baral and Dwijendralal Roy were memorable, while of those who followed him Satyendranath Dutta was easily the most distinguished for his wide sympathies and his wonderfully facile handling of the Bengali language. Karunanidhan Banerjee, Jatindranath Sen Gupta and Mohitlal Majumder also attained distinction—Karunanidhan for his love of nature and the good old days, and Jatindranath and Mohitlal for their intellectual pessimism. Kumud Ranjan Mallick and Kalidas Roy of the same age are widely popular.

Of Rabindranath's earlier followers in the field of fiction Prabhatkumar Mukherjee was widely read for his humorous short stories. Charuchandra Banerjee and Saurindra Mohan Mukherjee had also some popularity. But they were outdone by Saratchandra Chatterjee who had been deeply touched by Rabindranath's humanism and art and had commenced writing towards the close of the nineteenth century, but could not be persuaded to publish his writings earlier than 1913. His success was phenomenal and continued to be so till his death in 1938.

At the outset he was considered a realist, and a powerful one,

and hence his immense vogue with a very large section of our reading public and equally strong denunciation of him by the elders, because realism was more or less an exception in Bengal's literary tradition. The critics were however practically silenced in a few years, not because they were convinced of the error of their standpoint but because their criticisms fell on unwilling ears. Such wide-spread and genuine popularity has not been enjoyed by any other modern Bengali writer, perhaps not even by Bankimchandra and Rabindranath. Saratchandra is still widely read though voices against him are also being raised.

About half a century has elapsed since Saratchandra took the reading public of Bengal by storm, and we are now in a better position to view him dispassionately. We now see clearly enough his limitations: he is not very rich in creative imagination, and his interests are not sufficiently wide. He often betrays sentimentality, which is almost the reverse of realism. But with all these serious defects Saratchandra is not likely to suffer much in popularity or importance for the chief reason that he has seen misery, self-wrought or imposed, in various shapes and has succeeded in depicting it in unfaltering lines. This is his realism, without which no writer is worth the name. But he is also an idealist, and quite a big one. Deep down in him there is the faith that man is by nature lovely and great and that all his errors and sins and failures are but dust and mud sticking on the outside; they may be shaken off in a moment and man reinstated in his native glory.

Some may view this attitude of Saratchandra also as sentimentalism. But really it is made of a sterner stuff. It is his creed, the most sustaining thing in a man. Of course there are bad creeds. But bad or good they have to be reckoned with. It is fortunate that Saratchandra's faith was a noble one. His art fared so well because it was coupled with so noble a faith, his weaknesses notwithstanding. In literary evaluation, or rather in any evaluation, merits, if they are genuine, count for more than defects even though they be numerous.

A few years after the advent of Saratchandra, Bengali readers met with another realist in Dr. Nareshchandra Sen Gupta, a jurist. He was also widely read. But his popularity has waned considerably. He drew public attention perhaps by the variety

of information in his novels. His characters were mostly symbols of ideas, and so did not take long to wear off.

Kazi Nazrul Islam who entered the literary field of Calcutta in 1919, chiefly as a writer of sentimental short stories, was at that time a mere youth of twenty with no pretention to scholarship. But his short stories had some fascination, particularly for youthful readers and writers, and his wonderful vivacity fascinated the young and the old alike. The age was tense with political fervour, both of the Khilafat and the Congress variety, and Nazrul drank deep in it. The Swadeshi movement of Bengal, particularly the exploits of the terrorists, had a tremendous appeal for him. The new atmosphere easily fired his imagination and set him to composing heroic songs and poems which gained immediate popularity. Two years afterwards he wrote his famous poem "Vidrohi" (The Rebel) which secured for him an all-Bengal fame almost overnight and subsequently all-India fame. His writings easily landed him in jail where he fasted for some forty days.

He became a great force in the fight for freedom, his chief weapons being his songs and poems which breathed an uncompromising opposition to tyranny and injustice in every form. He became a people's poet par excellence. He also composed innumerable love songs, particularly ghazals, and a number of religious songs. He wrote a few novels and dramas also. But his fame rests almost exclusively on his poems and songs.

Voices against the quality of Nazrul's poems were raised when his popularity was at its zenith and are heard today as well. There is no doubt that he has blemishes : he betrays immaturity often; his words are not always telling. But against these blemishes are to be ranged the rare excellences of a superior soul that knew no fear, and had unbounded faith in the possibilities of men and women whom we see around us and often find despicable. If his poems record his weaknesses, they record equally well the rare flashes of his superior soul. It is significant that being in the grip of an incurable disease he has been practically dead for the last fifteen years, yet he is being remembered every year with warmth of feeling by innumerable men and women in both the Bengals. Like Walt Whitman he is a poet of democracy —of the people—out and out; the people also understand him and feel the pull of his upsurging sentiments. As the people of

our country are coming into their own it is likely that they will remember their poet with even greater warmth.

After Nazrul Islam, Jasimuddin won wide recognition as a poet, particularly as a village-poet. The folk-literature of Bengal is, we have known, uncommonly rich; he drew largely on it.

The Mussalmans of Bengal did not fare badly in pre-British Bengali literature. We have mentioned Daulat Kazi and Alaol of the seventeenth century. There were also other noted poets belonging to the Muslim community; and among the Bauls, Muslims occupied perhaps the leading role. The patronage extended to Bengali literature by Muslim princes and noblemen of old was also considerable; some would go to the length of calling that patronage the determining factor in that age, for the Brahmins were averse to the cultivation of the "bhasha"—the people's language. But in our new literature that was born in the nineteenth century Muslims had almost no active part; at least none of our front-rank *litterateurs* of that century came from that community. The anomaly is thus explained: the new times demanded new leadership for the brotherhood, but unfortunately it was not to be had. On the contrary, Wahhabism with its slogan of "Back to the pristine purity of Islam" engaged with force the attention of the alert section of the community—for political reasons obviously. The result was that Muslims of India as a community avoided English education for more than half a century, and a good number of them placed themselves in armed opposition against the British power in India during the days of the 1857 Mutiny. A wide-spread disaster for the community followed, and the leaders of the time, Nawab Abdul Latif Khan Bahadur of Bengal and Sir Syed Ahmed of U.P. busied themselves in mitigating it as best as they could by opening up avenues of income for Mussalmans by the spread of English education among them, but doing next to nothing in regard to their intellectual and spiritual rehabilitation which was needed so badly. Lessons in that sorely needed rehabilitation the Mussalmans of Bengal, however, began to learn from world events and particularly from the Swadeshi movement of Bengal in which our nineteenth century renaissance took an attractive and fairly intelligible shape. So we have from amongst Muslims of Bengal worthy *litterateurs* like Begum Rokeya (commonly known as Mrs. R. S. Hossain), Kazi Imdadul Huq and Lutfar

Rahman, almost since the first decade of the twentieth century. They were not prolific writers, but are memorable for the quality of their writings; they were earnest humanists and expressed themselves effectively.

We have spoken of Nazrul Islam. A few years after his advent there sprang up at Dacca (East Bengal) in its university area a literary organization named Muslim Sahitya Samaj (Muslim Literary Society) whose watchword was "Emancipation of the intellect". It had its inspiration from Kemal Ataturk's reforms in Turkey, from Rammohun Roy and his latter-day followers like Rabindranath and Pramatha Choudhury, from the well-known Sufis, and from the Prophet Muhammad himself. It had a great response from the Muslim college and university students of Dacca who gained intellectually and culturally (so the then authorities of the Dacca University admitted) by their contact with it; and it was also well received by a large section of the educated Muslims all over the province. But before long it met with strong opposition from the orthodox section of the community, so much so that its meetings were forbidden in the Muslim Hall of the Dacca University after its third annual session. The rest of its story—though not very short—is easily told if we remember that those were the times when the communal tension which resulted in the division of our country began to intensify. A few of its members are, however, still active as writers.

The years which witnessed the rise of the Muslim rationalists at Dacca also witnessed the emergence of a group of young writers fairly gifted, who styled themselves, or were styled, ultra-moderns. Gokul Nag, Premendra Mitra, Jibanananda Das,[6] Buddhadev Bose and Achintya Sen Gupta were the stalwarts of this group. Premendra Mitra expressed the credo of the group thus :

I am the poet of the blacksmiths,
of the brass-workers, of the carpenters, of the day-labourers,
I am the poet of the low.

Buddhadev Bose and Achintya Sen Gupta were at that time pronounced Freudians. They were prolific writers even at that young age and were most loud about their claim to have their own ways. Rabindranath got perturbed over these ultra-moderns

[6]His career was unfortunately cut off by premature death. His book of poems *Srestha Kavita* was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Prize in 1955.—*Ed.*

and had with them an exchange of unpleasant words which however had no immediate effect on them. But Rabindranath with his sense of decorum and his readiness to recognize merit wherever found could not allow the controversy to proceed far. In the new novels and short stories which the poet wrote the ultra-moderns noted with jubilation evidences of their influence on him. But the veteran poet only tried to point to the ultra-moderns how best to handle the subjects they were enamoured of. The ultra-moderns were then a long way off from Tagore's refinement.

They, however grew up, at least three of them—Jibanananda Das with his repose and absorption in nature, Premendra Mitra with his robust romanticism and Buddhadev Bose with his joyous consciousness of the gift of poesy. Ajit Dutta, a friend of the group but a little different in temperament, also wrote with power on youth, love and nature. They were followed by others such as Sudhindranath Dutta, Bishnu De and Amiya Chakravarty, of whom Sudhindranath Dutta is easily distinctive for his powerful diction and intellectuality. These moderns —barring perhaps Premendra Mitra—reveal, when assessed at their best, their affiliation not so much with Tagore or any other Bengali poet as with the present-day English and Continental poets with their egotism and bitterness and disdain for the sorry state of the world of today. Their fundamental difference with Tagore who was, so to say, incapable of being a pessimist even though he never lived in an ivory tower, and who was essentially a non-egotist, is thus revealed; and so also is revealed their significant position in modern Bengali life and literature. In manner also they differ considerably from Tagore, and have not an inconsiderable following. It is difficult—and perhaps premature—to express any opinion as to their position in the days ahead. They are undoubtedly writers of power. Their egotism —the chief thing about them—has the power to fascinate; but it is yet to be seen if it has also the power to ensure remembrance in the human heart. Of our young poets Naresh Guha, Dinesh Das and Govinda Chakravarty have come into some prominence.

Our ultra-modern poets represent largely the malaise of modern times. But the same cannot be said of our present-day writers of novels and short stories, at least, of the majority of them. They are carrying on more or less the traditions of modern

Bengali fiction, particularly those of Tagore and Saratchandra. After Saratchandra, Bibhuti Bhusan Banerjee made the most distinctive contribution to Bengali fiction by his short stories and novels, specially by his novels, *Aranyak*[7] and *Pather Panchali* (which in its cinematographed form has received international applause). Bibhuti Bhusan was a great lover of nature and of our unsophisticated and warm-hearted village life that is passing away. Conflict in life and character which is usually the favourite subject of modern novelists had no fascination for him, and so he may not be classed among them. But he is great as an artist without being "modern"—a great artist because there was a wealth of warmth in his apprehension of man's everyday relation with nature and in his presentation of it.

Barring Bibhuti Bhusan the post-Saratchandra novelists and short story writers may be placed in three classes: those who followed more or less the traditions of Rabindranath and Saratchandra, those who are ultra-moderns in poetry and are not wholly without that temperament in their fictions also; and those who are leftists. Of the first group the distinguished names are: Sailajananda Mukherjee, Premendra Mitra, Mahbubul Alam (of Chittagong), Banaphul, Annada Sankar Ray, Tara Sankar Bandyopadhyaya, Saroj Ray Choudhury, Bibhuti Bhusan Mukhopadhyaya, Subodh Ghosh, Narayan Gangopadhyaya, Satinath Bhaduri, Narendra Mitra and Ashapurna Devi. Manik Bandyopadhyaya also rose to fame as a traditionist, but subsequently he went over to the leftist persuasion. Sailajananda is a fine artist; his acquaintance with Bengali life is wide and intimate; his delineation of the tribal people is considered to be his best. Premendra Mitra's acquaintance with 'low life' is also intimate; but he has acquitted himself far better in his short stories, perhaps on account of his romantic dream of the beautiful—of the becoming. Mahbubul Alam's best book is his *Momener Jabanbandi* (Confessions of a Believer). He delights in viewing life as it is, without any coloured glass on. There is something elemental about him. But his output is meagre. Banaphul also has an attraction towards the elemental. He is however a better artist in his short stories. Annada Sankar Ray is perhaps the most ambitious novelist among the moderns.

[7]Selected by Sahitya Akademi for translation in all major Indian languages.—*Ed.*

He has already written a novel in six parts and has begun another of like dimensions. His best yet is his *Mon-Paban*, a collection of short stories with pleasantly subtle characterization. Tara Sankar Bandyopadhyaya is the most popular of our present day novelists. He delights in depicting regional life on a big scale and has achieved fair success in the attempt. His popularity is perhaps ascribable to it and also to the fact that his art is largely photographic. Of late he seems to have turned to subtle characterization. Saroj Roy Choudhury has written a new *Forsyte Saga* for us. Bibhuti Bhusan Mukhopadhyaya is a good humorist. Subodh Ghosh draws with power typical characters; Narayan Gangopadhyaya draws vividly, particularly distressed humanity; Satinath Bhaduri delights in psychological analysis; Narendra Mitra views with love and understanding everyday Bengali life; and Ashapurna Devi with her keen sense of the little ironies of life, particularly of the middle-class Bengali life, delights in depicting that aspect of the woman's soul which loves solitude and non-interference and abhors vulgarity. Among our romanticists Premendra Mitra, Buddhadev Bose, Achintya Sen Gupta, Manindralal Bose, Manoj Bose and Prabodh Kumar Sanyal are the leading figures. Of them Premendra Mitra is decidedly outstanding, particularly in his short stories. After Rabindranath and Saratchandra he is perhaps our best writer of short stories. Ashim Roy is a young romanticist of promise.

Manik Bandyopadhyaya is the acknowledged leader of the leftists. He won wide fame by his novel, *Putulnacher Itikatha* in which he showed himself a consummate artist with a thoroughly disillusioned attitude towards life. Yet his men and women love and find a sort of fulfilment in it. In his writings of the leftist phase he does not seem to have attained new heights—only his bitterness is more marked. Our leftists have not as a rule fared well in fiction. After Manik Bandyopadhyaya is to be mentioned Amarendra Ghosh. His *Char Kashem* is a memorable production of our times like its European counterpart, *Growth of the Soil*. But Ghosh is more a humanist than a leftist. So also are some young leftists—of them Samaresh Basu and Golam Kuddus deserve mention—who seem to have intimate acquaintance with some aspects of our present-day life. Gopal Haldar's trilogy—*Ekada*, *Anya Din* and *Ar-ek Din*—a novel predominantly of ideas, is also a mentionable leftist production.

In poetry too leftists do not seem to have fared well up till now except perhaps Sukanta Bhattacharya who died young. He was also more a humanist than a leftist. Some of our young leftist poets—of them Subhash Mukherjee, Manindra Roy and Purnendu Patri may be singled out—seem, however, to be quite earnest about their vocation and are likely to shape well.

Quite a number of our women also have contributed, in significant ways, to our modern literature. Particularly mentionable names among them are: Swarna Kumari Devi, Girindra Mohini Dasi, Mankumari Devi, Kamini Ray, Priyamvada Devi, Begum Rokeya, Nirupama Devi, Anurupa Devi, Sita Devi, Santa Devi, Lila Mazumder, Moitreyi Devi, Protibha Bose, Begum Sufia Kamal, Probhabati Devi, Begum Shams-un-Nahar, Mahmuda Khatun Siddiqa, Radharani Devi, Ashapurna Devi and Bani Roy.

Our Children's Literature also deserves special mention. Our old *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* as also our folk-literature had fascinating aspects for children. But our moderns have made it distinctive. Rabindranath's Child Poems have received world recognition. After him are to be mentioned Abanindranath Tagore, the leader of India's artistic rejuvenation, Dakshina Ranjan Mitra Majumder, Upendra Kishore Roy Choudhury, Jogindranath Bose, Sukumar Roy, Sukhalata Rao and Sunirmal Bose.

We have seen that modern Bengali literature is fairly rich in poetry and fiction. But in drama its position is not, unfortunately, high. It began well with Dinabandhu Mitra's *Nil Darpan* in the sixties of the last century; but melodrama blocked its path of progress, and has not cleared off yet. Girish Chandra Ghosh and Dwijendralal Roy, two of our most renowned dramatists, are also essentially writers of melodramas. Rabindranath's dramas form a class by themselves. Most of them are literary jewels, but with the exception of a few, they cannot take the place of dramas for the people.

In essays Bengali has reached a high standard, Rabindranath and Pramatha Choudhury being our greatest figures in that field. Other distinguished names are: Bhudev Mukhopadhyaya, Bepin Chandra Pal, Ramendra Sundar Trivedi, Sasanka Mohan Sen, Mohitlal Mazumder, Atul Chandra Gupta, Dhurjati Prasad Mukhopadhyaya, Gopal Haldar, Annada Sankar Ray,

Humayun Kabir, Srikumar Banerjee, Pramathanath Bisi, Abu Sayeed Ayyub, Buddhadev Bose, Qazi Motahar Hossain, Sanjoy Bhattacharya, Sayed Motaher Hossain Choudhury, and Sibnarayan Ray. We have also some really good biographies, but their number is limited. In *belles-lettres* two of our moderns —Jajabar and Syed Mujtaba Ali—have gained wide pupularity. Parashuram, the far-famed humorist, is in a class by himself.

Dr. Dinesh Chandra Sen, Dr. Sukumar Sen and Sajani Kanta Das have distinguished themselves as historians of our literature, and Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee and Dr. Muhammed Shahidullah as our philologists.

Professors Kshiti Mohan Sen and Rezaul Karim are our great cultural reconcilers between Hindus and Muslims.

Modern Bengali has also a distinctive religious literature; the most distinguished names in that field are those of Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore, Brahmananda Keshav Chandra Sen, Sri Ramakrishna, Moulana Girish Chandra Sen, Aswini Kumar Dutta and Rabindranath.

In translation we are definitely poor—very few world classics are available in our language. But of late some of our young writers have taken to this work seriously. In the latter part of his life Rabindranath effected further improvement in our prose, and the legacy is proving very helpful to our prose writers in every field. Besides literature proper we have some good books on philosophy and history but they are also limited in number.

In social sciences and sciences proper we have of late begun well. Public libraries and reading rooms which are on the increase are helping the production of serious literature.

We have a good encyclopaedia in our old *Visvakosha*; but fresh ones are badly needed. We have some good lexicons.

Among the Bengalis of East Pakistan the most marked thing is the rise of a band of young writers who are earnest patriots and intellectuals. They differ from the Wahhabite position substantially. With peace and good government prevailing Bengalis with their fairly well-formed language and literature and their inspiring near past are likely to attain new heights in the field of letters in the foreseeable future.

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INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH

K. R. SRINIVASA IYENGAR

INTRODUCTION

THE British impact on India has given rise, among other things, to an impressive mass of writing in English that could be conveniently described as 'Indo-English literature'. But this is really a Janus-faced literature. There is, in the first place, the literature created by Englishmen in India—or, less frequently, by Englishmen fascinated by India, though from a safe romantic distance—who have made India the theme of their writings. English writers since the time of Chaucer have no doubt scattered stray or vague references to India in their works. But 'Anglo-Indian literature'—as this literature inspired by Indian motifs and by the Indian spirit, but created by Englishmen, is called—properly begins only with Sir William Jones towards the close of the 18th century. A cross-fertilization of two fruitful cultures seemed imminent, but, actually, the Anglo-Indians failed to rise to the occasion. Jones and Leyden, Sir Alfred Lyall and Sir Edwin Arnold made a promising beginning, but the beginning was almost the end as well. Even when they were men of goodwill, the Anglo-Indians were generally obsessed by a sense of their racial superiority, and this effectively ruled out any real fusion of the two cultures. Self-conscious, unattached to the seething world of Indian India, lacking alike faith and vision, the average Anglo-Indian writer lost himself (to quote Mr E. F. Oaten) 'in the rocks and forests of inanity and purposelessness'. A classic like Forster's *A Passage to India* and (at the other end of the scale) an atrocity like Nichols's *Verdict on India* are but accidents in English literature rather than meritorious or debased exhibits of Anglo-Indian literature. With the dawn of Indian independence, Anglo-Indian literature has inevitably lost its distinctive status, although books are still written by Englishmen (and by Americans) which have a more or less recognizable Indian background.

There is, in the second place, the literature created by Indians in English, and it is not inappropriate to describe it as 'Indo-Anglian literature'. Although Mr George Sampson includes

Indian writers like Tagore, Manmohan Ghose and Sri Aurobindo in his *Concise Cambridge History of English Literature* and comments on their work in the section devoted to 'Anglo-Indian literature', it is desirable to differentiate between Englishmen who write on Indian themes and Indians who use English as their medium of artistic expression. As early as 1883, there appeared in Calcutta a book entitled *Indo-Anglian Literature*, containing 'specimen compositions from native students'. More recently, especially during the past 25 years, the term 'Indo-Anglian' has acquired considerable currency. It has no racial or religious significance. It is reasonably descriptive, and it can be conveniently used both to label the writer and to describe the literature. No wonder the name has 'come to stay.'

In his Introduction to the present writer's P.E.N. monograph on Indo-Anglian literature, the late Dr C. R. Reddy declared :

> 'Indo-Anglian literature is not essentially different in kind from Indian literature. It is a part of it, a modern facet of that glory which, commencing from the Vedas, has continued to spread its mellow light, now with greater and now with lesser brilliance under the inexorable vicissitudes of time and history, ever increasingly up to the present time of Tagore, Iqbal and Aurobindo Ghose, and bids fair to expand with our and our humanity's expanding future.'

Now, Indian literature itself, in its latest or 'modern' phase, is little more than a century old. During the 17th and 18th centuries there was in this vast sub-continent, once the home of learning, the liberal arts and culture, hardly any organized education worth mention. No serious attempt was made—or could be made in the prevalent conditions—to bridge the widening gap between the few still surviving centres of traditional learning and the teeming illiterate millions. An unutterable lethargy, at once physical, intellectual and spiritual, possessed the body and soul of the Indian people, and the stream of Indian culture seemed to have lost itself in the parched desert of the national enslavement.

The British impact, however, gave us in the fulness of time three needed impulses. 'It revived', in the words of Sri Aurobindo, 'the dormant intellectual and critical impulse; it rehabilitated life and awakened the desire of new creation; it put the reviving Indian spirit face to face with novel conditions

and ideals and the urgent necessity of understanding, assimilating and conquering them.' If new ideas and a new literature were to take root and flourish, a new climate of thought and purpose had to be created. It might still be the familiar Indian soil, but modern tools and rich manure would be very welcome. Raja Rammohun Roy, a Titan possessed of vision and fertility of resource, saw in clear outline the new virile India of his dreams and strove hard to realize it there and then. The Christian missionaries set up printing presses all over the country and published cheap versions of the Bible in the Indian regional languages. The Orientalists gave a new turn to Indian scholarship, and many a classic was rescued from oblivion and given to the world. For a time, however, the partisans of English and indigenous education fought an exhausting wordy battle, but the reformers won at last. The revolutionary fervour of Rammohun and his associates, the educational enterprise of the missionaries and the adoption by Government, in 1835, of Macaulay's scheme of modern education through the English medium, as good as settled the pattern of Indian education and culture for at least a century to come.

Slowly but steadily, the schools and colleges imparting education through the medium of English increased in number and commanded more and more prestige, and within a generation or two, a very considerable number of Indians had been introduced to the multitudinous riches of European (and, especially, English) literature and culture. Many of the young men who thus received the blessings of a dynamic education in the new schools were fired with the ambition to put India once more on the cultural map of the world. They yearned to make their seemingly dumb country articulate once again. This meant naturally that they should themselves write, either in English or in their own mother-tongues. They should write in English so that they could easily compel the attention of their English 'masters' and also reach their own countrymen in the different linguistic areas; and they should write in their mother-tongues, for not otherwise could they save their own souls nor hope to educate the masses. And whether they wrote in English or in their mother-tongues, they sought their models in English literature, which was the only modern European literature that they knew. The shock of the Western impact had turned the sod,

while English literature had fertilized the field; and in due course modern Indian literature was born. Like modern Bengali, Hindi, Marathi, Telugu, Tamil, or Gujarati literature, Indo-Anglian literature is also an Indian literature, with a bright tradition of its own and still exhibiting signs of abundant life and energy.

The story of Indo-Anglian literature roughly falls into five rather unequal sections as under:

1820-1870 : The Beginnings—the Age of the great Pioneers.
1870-1900 : The Renaissance in the Spirit—the Age of Religious and Literary Awakening.
1900-1920 : The Era of Political Awakening—the Age of 'Bandemataram' and 'Home Rule'.
1920-1947 : The Era of the Gandhian Revolution—the modern 'Heroic Age'.
1947- : The Era of Independence.

This is a convenient, rather than an absolute, way of dividing the period to be covered, and overlapping cannot be avoided.

1820-1870

As might be expected, the earliest writings of the Indians in English were in prose, and Rammohun Roy was the first great Indo-Anglian writer of prose. Rammohun was truly a pioneering spirit. An Olympian figure, he inaugurated purposive reform in many departments of our national life, and he was, in all that he did, primarily a builder. It was his destiny to clear the ground of much rubbish and to lay the foundations of the New India to come. He was besides a master of lucid English prose. His arresting and forceful personality revealed itself in books like *Precepts of Jesus* (1820) and innumerable other prose tracts and pamphlets.

If Rammohun Roy was the first Indian to write English prose with self-confidence and masterly ease, Henry Derozio was the first of the Indo-Anglian poets. Born in 1807, Derozio had a somewhat chequered career, and died of cholera in 1831. He has left behind him a creditable body of English verse, including the narrative poem, *The Fakir of Jungheera*. Half-Indian, half-Portuguese, Derozio was wholly Indian in spirit and aspired to be India's national bard. Creditable as are his achievements in poetry, he is to be admired even more for the great promise underlying his actual output. Another pioneer, Kashiprosad

Ghose, was the author of *The Shair and Other Poems* (1830), but his work has little intrinsic poetic quality.

With the establishment of the Universities of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras in 1857, a new generation arose that lisped the mighty harmonies of Milton and repeated Burke's thundering periods, and the Indo-Anglian writer found that he had a fast-growing audience to appreciate his work. Journalism in English attracted many young men, but poetry too had her votaries. Among these latter, Michael Madhusudan Dutt takes a high rank. He was an Indian Christian, and he too had a star-crossed destiny. He belongs primarily to Bengali literature, but besides editing an English newspaper at Madras, he also wrote in English a narrative poem entitled *The Captive Ladie* (1849), retelling vividly the story of Prithvi Raj and Rani Samyukta.

1870-1900

These were the pioneers, but the mere imitators, the practitioners who tried in vain to effect a marriage of Indian modes of thought or feeling and English forms or formulae of expression, were many. The English Romantics—the poets and novelists of the early 19th century—fatally attracted them, but the Indo-Anglian experiments were more often than not mere tinsel. Presently, however, the time-spirit threw up a number of extraordinary men and women who demonstrated over and over again that they could achieve triumphant self-expression through the medium of English. The last three decades of the 19th century witnessed the splendid flowering of a new spiritual renaissance, and Ramakrishna Paramahamsa opened the eyes of Indians, who had for a time been almost blinded by the glare of Western civilization, to the splendours in the firmament of the Spirit. Vivekananda was soon to carry the Master's message to the very ends of the civilized world, and he tuned the English language for the purposes of Vedantic exposition and missionary exhortation. Several of the evangelists of the Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj and Prarthana Samaj movements too, likewise, wielded the English language with consummate mastery and ease.

With Aru Dutt and Toru Dutt we reach the first truly significant chapter of fulfilment in the history of Indo-Anglian poetry—but tragedy was involved with the fulfilment. Aru died in 1874 and Toru in 1877, aged twenty and twenty-one respectively.

Like Derozio, Aru and Toru too were the 'inheritors of unfulfilled renown', poetesses of rare promise and no mean achievement. Their English renderings of French lyrics of the Romantic school came out in 1876 with the title *A Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields*. While Aru contributed to the volume a few pieces including the justly famous 'Morning Serenade' which filled Edmund Gosse with 'surprise and almost rapture', Toru's was the main inspiration behind it and in fact only her name appeared on the title-page. Her *Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan* appeared posthumously in 1882, and more than ever proved her facility and power of poetic utterance in a foreign medium. The stories of Savitri and Sita and Dhruva and Prahlada, told so often before, are told again with a new freshness and charm. Eighty years have elapsed since Toru Dutt's poems were first given to the world, but it is certain, as Mr H. A. L. Fisher declared, that she will ever remain 'in the great fellowship of English poets'.

Unlike Aru and Toru Dutt, Romesh Chunder Dutt lived a life full of honour and years. Apart from treatises like *A History of Civilization in Ancient India* (1890), *Economic History of British India* (1902) and *India in the Victorian Age* (1904), he published English verse renderings of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, and two of his Bengali novels also appeared in English with the titles, *The Lake of Palms* and *The Slave-Girl of Agra*. Romesh Chunder's *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* are a triumph of condensation, for he has reduced the 24,000 verses of the former and the 2,00,000 verses of the latter to about 4,000 couplets in the *Locksley Hall* metre. This has been achieved, not by crudely summarizing the original epics, but by omitting most of the episodes and also some of the less important narrative portions and by supplying the necessary connecting links in prose. It is sufficient commendation to say that Romesh Chunder's versions have stood the test of time and are still the best introductions in English to our great national epics. Among other Indian writers of English were Ramakrishna Pillai (*Tales of Ind*, 1895), Behramji Malabari (*The Indian Muse in English Garb*, 1876, and *The Indian Eye on English Life*, 1893) and Nagesh Wishvanath Pai (*Stray Sketches in Chakmakpore*, 1894, and *The Angel of Misfortune*, 1904). Pai was the most remarkable of the three, and both as a Theophrastian portraitist and as a narrative poet he showed how, although handling the English medium, he could evoke a wholly Indian

atmosphere and give his writing an individuality and distinction all its own. Ramakrishna Pillai was also the author of two novels, *Padmini* (1903) and *The Dance of Death* (1912), neither of which arose above the level of well-cultivated mediocrity.

1900-1920

When we now turn to the Titans, Tagore and Sri Aurobindo, we are in the presence of powers that swayed more than one vast realm of activity, personalities that held the scene for nearly sixty years, spanning across the 19th and the 20th centuries. Since the Indian National Congress was founded, there had no doubt been a stir of activity on the political front; but it was during the first decade of the present century that the nationalist movement acquired a fiery pointedness and purpose. *Bandemataram!* It became the reviving *mantra* of India's awakened nationhood, and first Bengal, and presently all India, responded to the call for action. Men of letters became men of action overnight, and men of action turned men of letters when an alien despotism threw them into prison. Sri Aurobindo had 'Narayana Darshan' in his cell at Alipur, and Tilak wrote his *Gita Rahasya* in the Mandalay jail. The 'Bandemataram' and 'Home Rule' movements of the first two decades of the 20th century gave the country a period of hectic striving and heroic suffering. And the literature of the period—and, not least, Indo-Anglian literature—faithfully reflected the striving and the suffering, the defeat and the glory.

Although it is true enough that Tagore's place—and it is a pre-eminent place—is in Bengali literature, circumstances had compelled him (as it has compelled many others) to be bi-lingual, and this is how he has secured an abiding place in Indo-Anglian literature as well. Apart from the English versions he made of his poems and plays, he also wrote in English *The Child*, an impressionistic description of the pilgrimage of men and women of all types to the hypothetical Shrine of Fulfilment, reincarnating as it were Ibsen's brand. His prose works too—notably *Sadhana*, *Nationalism*, *Personality*, *The Religion of Man* (1930)—were originally written in English, being meant for an international public. Judged by any standards whatsoever, Tagore's many-sided achievements must compel recognition, and he is not of Bengal's only, but India's and the world's. The poet, the

story-teller and the novelist, the philosopher, the educationist and the prophet of enlightened humanism, these diverse facets of this great laureate of renascent India are included in and exceeded by the phenomenon that was Rabindranath. 'He has knocked at our gate and all the bars have given way. Our doors have burst open.'

Aurobindo Ghose and his elder brother, Manmohan, had their education in England, and while still there made a bid for the laurel wreath. Oscar Wilde, duly impressed by Manmohan's poems, wrote in the *Pall Mall Gazette*: 'Mr Ghose ought some day to make a name in our literature.' *Love Songs and Elegies* (1898) and the posthumously published *Songs of Love and Death* (1916) contain Manmohan's most enduring work. Poetic sequences like his 'Immortal Eve' and 'Orphic Mysteries' almost irradiate the true pathos and sublime of pure poetry. Pain was present, but it didn't altogether embitter him; buried in impenetrable melancholy to all outward appearance, Manmohan could still catch till the very end 'the great rhythm that thunders up to bliss'.

Manmohan's brother, Aurobindo, had his schooling at St. Paul's, London, and finished up at Cambridge. Although he passed the Civil Service examination, he was lucky enough to escape its bondage. He taught for a time at the Baroda College, and soon found himself gravitating towards politics. He was also concurrently drawn to the discipline of Yoga. After playing a prominent part in politics during 1907—09, he retired to Pondicherry for study and meditation and remained there till he passed away in December 1950. A master of many languages —Greek and Latin, English and French, German and Italian, Sanskrit and Bengali—and a master no less of many knowledges and disciplines, he became in the fulness of time a veritable Pilgrim of Eternity, a *mahapurusha*, a *mahayogi*. A community of *sadhaks* (disciples) grew round him at Pondicherry, and since his death an International University Centre has been organized at the Ashram he had founded there.

Considered merely as a poet and as a critic of life and letters, Sri Aurobindo would still be among the supreme masters of our time. The two sumptuous volumes of his *Collected Poems and Plays* (1942) contained work that had been written as early as the eighteen-nineties and also recent experiments in quantitative

verse. As translator and narrative poet, as metrical and verbal craftsman, as lyric and dramatic poet, as daring experimenter and explorer, and, above all, as 'futurist' poet with an utterance all his own, Sri Aurobindo has a record of poetic achievement without a parallel in our day. *Urvasie* and *Love and Death* are nobly articulate narrative poems, while *Baji Prabhou* is a first-rate poem of action; *Perseus, the Deliverer* is a blank verse drama, striking in its situations and prophetic in its appeal; *The Rose of God* and *Thought the Paraclete* are among the finest mystical poems in the language. Sri Aurobindo has also successfully adapted classical quantitative metres to his own purpose and accomplished new harmonies with the much maligned hexameter in long poems like *Ahana* and *Ilion.*

Sri Aurobindo was, besides, a great master of prose, rather in the tradition of Sir Thomas Browne and De Quincey, although if he wanted, he could write prose of a sparkling simplicity and winning naturalness. The thought that he has put into gigantic works like *The Life Divine*, *Essays on the Gita*, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, *The Social Cycle*, *The Ideal of Human Unity* and *The Future Poetry* (which originally appeared in the *Arya* between 1914 and 1921 but have since been reprinted in book form) has an integrality that combines the industry of the researcher, the imaginative fervour of the poet and the creative vision of the seer. Notable among his shorter prose works are *The Mother*, *Heraclitus* and *The Renaissance in India.*

Like Aurobindo, Sarojini Naidu too started as a poet, but later politics claimed her and she was destined to play an important role in the Gandhian era. Her first collection of poems, *The Golden Threshold* (1905), established her reputation as a poet of distinction. When she found her voice as a public speaker in 1906, Gokhale said:

> 'Your speech was more than an intellectual treat of the highest order. It was a perfect piece of art. We all felt for the moment to be lifted to a higher plane.'

Two more collections of poems came out at long intervals, *The Bird of Time* (1912) and *The Broken Wing* (1917). As a poet, Sarojini Naidu's mastery over verse forms enabled her to achieve such flawless lyrics as 'To a Buddha Seated on a Lotus' and 'The Flute-Player of Brindavan'. Like her own 'Bird of Time', Sarojini also has covered a wide range in her

poetry, although her special field is the delineation of the beauty of familiar things. In the later volumes, however, there is a more conscious reiteration of the burden of sorrow, a more controlled picturesqueness, a deeper music, a more mature 'prayer of the intellect'; and while the poetic vintage is the same, it is of a riper age than that of *The Golden Threshold*. 'The Temple: A Pilgrimage of Love'' in the final volume is a trilogy of lyric sequences, each of eight poems, and has been compared by Mr John Gawsworth to Mrs Browning's *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. Although she once said that her woman's intelligence could not 'grapple with the transcendent details of politics,' she served India, the Mother, till the last, for in the Gandhian era politics became for her but a form of love and sedition but a form of poetry.

1920-1947

At the end of the First World War, India found herself on the threshold of a new era rich with singular possibilities. There was a change of scene, and a change too in the *dramatis personae*. Phirozeshah Mehta was no more, Gokhale and Tilak were no more; hushed was Bepin Pal's fiery eloquence, and Surendranath's periods lost their old magic; and Sri Aurobindo was a recluse at Pondicherry. A new scene, new actors, new modes. Indo-Anglian journalism became crisper and more pointed, our orators were brief and emphatic, and our prose writers attempted to shake off the Macaulayan tyranny and sought more natural forms of persuasive expression. While, as a result of the onslaughts of the Gandhian leadership, English education lost some of its glamour, actually the number of college students increased from 61,000 in 1917 to nearly 84,000 ten years later. Gandhiji himself relied on his English papers—*Young India*, and later, *Harijan*—to broadcast his views, programmes, prayer-speeches and battle-cries. Other leaders—notably C. R. Das, Motilal Nehru, Lajpat Rai, T. Prakasam, Pattabhi Sitaramayya—had also their own daily or weekly papers in English to present the nationalist viewpoint with varying degrees of individual emphasis. The college professor likewise often relied on English for self-expression, whether his work took the form of a prose treatise or, more occasionally, a collection of poems. Literature in the regional languages was looking up, but Indian writing in English was no

less vigorous and exhibited an equal versatility. The revolutions in taste which the British or European literary scene witnessed during the nineteen-twenties and thirties and their reflections or repercussions in far-off India, and the issue between convention and revolt, tradition and experiment, was fought here as much as elsewhere, and with equally inconclusive results.

Among the Indo-Anglians who came to sudden prominence in the nineteen-twenties, K. S. Venkataramani was perhaps the most stimulating in thought and versatile in talent. His first book, *Paper Boats* (1921), gave a few vignettes of South Indian life, delicately touched by an artist who is also a poet and a humorist. *On the Sand-Dunes* (1923) was a book of prose-poems, plaintively and at times aggressively moaning the general hurt that civilization has inflicted on sensitive humanity. *Murugan the Tiller* (1927) took the Madras intelligentsia by storm on its first publication. Its vivid pictures of village life, its satirical presentation of the blaze of action and opinion that characterizes urban life, its profound studies in character, its poetry and its humour, its mingling of realism and idealism, all made it a first-rate novel of India in transition. After *Murugan* came a book for children, *A Day with Sambhu*, and *The Next Rung*, a tract for the times. Venkataramani's second novel, *Kandan the Patriot* (1932), was inspired by the Gandhian nationalist upheaval of 1930-31, and idealized politics even as *Murugan* had idealized rural economics, and they are different only to be complementary to each other. Another Madras writer, Shanker Ram, besides his two collections of short stories (*Children of the Kaveri* and *Creatures All*) has also published a very moving novel, *Love of Dust* (1938), which portrays a farmer's tenacious attachment to the soil. As a writer of fiction, Shanker Ram is at his best when he records those great spiritual crises in human lives where the dividing line between tears and laughter is very tenuous indeed.

A more prolific writer than either of the above, Mulk Raj Anand is engrossed in the many 'underdogs' of Indian society, and his *Two Leaves and a Bud*, *The Coolie*, *The Untouchable*, and *The Village* (1939) treat them, not patronisingly, but with the sympathy and even the respect due to them as human beings. The sweeper, the peasant, the plantation labourer, the city drudge, the sepoy, all emerge alive from his novels—anguished

and hungry, yet human, superstitious and self-divided, vividly realized in spite of their thwarted purposings. A more consistently satisfying artist, R. K. Narayan has several novels and collections of short stories to his credit. *Bachelor of Arts*, *The Dark Room* (1938), and *The English Teacher* (1945) contain some of his best work, and he is at his happiest when he deals with the vagaries of South Indian sophisticated life. The Anglicized Indian is Narayan's peculiar province, and he is portrayed in novel or short story in all his self-division, self-deception and absurdity. Narayan's recent *Waiting for the Mahatma*, like Raja Rao's *Kanthapura*, is an attempt to study the response of Indian humanity to the challenge of the Gandhian revolution. They are not political tracts, but works of prose art.

Among other novelists of the period special mention may be made of Humayun Kabir (*Men and Rivers*, 1945), D. F. Karaka (*There Lay the City*, 1941), Kumara Guru (*Life's Shadows*, 1938), Ahmad Ali (*Twilight in Delhi*, 1940), A. S. P. Ayyar (*Baladitya*, 1930) and K. Nagarajan (*Athawar House*).

To return to the poets: the twenty years wedged between the First and Second World Wars found the Indo-Anglian poets commendably active. There was Harindranath Chattopadhyaya who shone with great brilliance by his colourful surprises of spiritual idea and feeling. There were the professors—P. Seshadri, G. K. Chettur, V. N. Bhushan, Humayun Kabir, Uma Maheswer, N. V. Thadani—who, although generally content to follow tradition, demonstrated the utility and versatility of the Indo-Anglian muse. There were the Goan poets—Joseph Furtado, Armando Menezes, Manuel C. Rodrigues—who have given, among other things, a new intensity to the poetry of exile. S. R. Dongerkery, deftly fingering the lyre of convention, has given us *The Ivory Tower*, and Fredoon Kabraji's *A Minor Georgian's Swan Song* has many graceful as well as vigorous moments.

The 'rebels' or the 'new' poets, too, form a formidable contingent. The forty pieces in Shahid Suhrawardy's *Essays in Verse* (1937) are disturbingly articulate, reproducing as they do the pathetic moan, the raging fever and the uncertain palpitations that are the marks of our decadent civilization. Although Manjeri S. Isvaran and P. R. Kaikini began their poetic careers in the early thirties as idealists and traditionalists, the pressure of personal or outer conflicts would appear to have pushed them

more and more to the Left. Isvaran's *Catguts* and *Brief Orisons* (1941) are excruciating in the extreme. If disillusion has given a certain fearful edge to his poetry, he can also achieve haunting cadences. Kaikini's first two books were rather in the *Gitanjali* manner, but presently he turned to 'blood and war' in reaction to the changes in the international situation. Among other 'modernists' may be mentioned B. Rajan (*Monsoon*, 1945), Krishan Shungloo (*The Night is Heavy*, 1943), Nissim Ezekiel (*A Time to Change* and *Sixty Poems*), Subho Tagore, Sudhindranath Datta, Cyril Modak, Nilima Devi, J. Vijayatunga, P. Lal, A. K. Ramunujan, and R. L. Bartholomew. There is also the interesting phenomenon of Adi K. Sett writing free verse with some genuine feeling and elegance (*The Light above the Clouds*), while the saintly Gurdial Mallik, having been vouchsafed a vision of the Supreme in his 62nd year, makes his poetry (*Hound of the Heart*) the diary of his soul's immaculate quest and hymns the glory of God in terms of ecstatic adoration.

Besides poetry, other forms of literature have also been cultivated by the Indo-Anglians. The dramatists are but a handful, for they have little chance of having their plays presented on the stage. But V. V. Srinivasa Iyengar (*Dramatic Divertisements*), A. S. P. Ayyar (*Sita's Choice* and *Slave of Ideas*), Fyzee-Rahamin (*Daughter of Ind*), Bharati Sarabhai (*The Well of the People* and *Two Women*), Mrinalini Sarabhai (*Captive Soil*), J. M. Lobo-Prabhu (*Apes in the Parlour* and *The Family Cage*), Purushottam Tricamdas (*Sauce for the Goose*), T. P. Kailasam (*Karna, Fulfilment* and *The Burden*) and Harindranath Chattopadhyaya (*Five Plays*) have shown that play-writing in English by Indians is not impossible. The humorous essay, the light sketch, the Johnsonian 'loose sally of the mind', the Montaignesque thinking aloud are also in evidence in recent Indian writing in English. S. V. V.'s *Soap Bubbles, More Soap Bubbles* and *Chaff and Grain*, R. Bangaruswami's *My Lord Kukudoon Koon*, Iswara Dutt's *And All That*, N. G. Jog's *Onions and Opinions*, stray skits by R. K. Narayan, Chalapati Rau, Shanta Rungachary and M. Krishnan, and the 'Sidelights' column by Saka (Khasa Subba Rau), 'Over a Cup of Tea' column by Pothan Joseph, and the 'Sotto Voce' column by Vighneshwara (N. Raghunatha Iyer) are the best of their kind. Competent literary criticism has been attempted, among others, by N. K. Sidhanta (*The*

Heroic Age of India), Amaranatha Jha, Amiya Chakravarty, C. Narayana Menon (*Shakespeare Criticism*), Humayun Kabir (*Poetry, Monads and Society*), V. K. Gokak (*The Poetic Approach to Language*), M. M. Bhattacherji, S. C. Sen Gupta (*Shakespearian Comedy*), C. D. Narasimhaiah and K. Swaminathan. The literary criticism of Sri Aurobindo (*The Future Poetry*) and the art criticism of Ananda Coomaraswamy (*History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, *The Dance of Shiva* and *An Introduction to Indian Art*) are in a category apart. Good biographies have been published by Sir Homi Mody (*Phirozeshah Mehta*, 1921), Sir Rustom Masani (*Dadabhai Naoroji*, 1939), V. S. Srinivasa Sastri (*My Master Gokhale*, 1946), P. C. Ray (*Life and Times of C. R. Das*), Jadunath Sarkar (*Shivaji*), D. V. Tamhankar (*Lokamanya Tilak: Father of Indian Unrest and Maker of Modern India*), Ram Gopal (*Lokamanya Tilak*), Frank Moraes (*Jawaharlal Nehru*), and R. R. Diwakar (*Mahayogi*). Among writers of autobiographies, Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru have a pre-eminent place. Nirad C. Chaudhuri's *Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* has also been widely read and discussed. It has its limitations—it is a heavy, sullen and almost a morbid book—but it is weighted with learning and has the supreme merit of courageous honesty. Among others, Krishna Hutheesing (*With No Regrets*), Bharatan Kumarappa (*My Student Days in America*), Rajendra Prasad, Chimanlal Setalvad (*Recollections and Reflections*), K. Iswara Dutt (*The Street of Ink*), K. M. Munshi (*I Follow the Mahatma* and *The End of an Era*), Paramahansa Yogananda, Krishnalal Shridharani (*My India, My America*), P. E. Dustoor (*American Days*), Unni Nayar (*My Malabar*) and the late M. N. Roy have in their different ways demonstrated the facility of Indians in this difficult but apparently easy genre. History and philosophy can claim savants and thinkers of the eminence of M. G. Ranade, R. C. Dutt, Tilak, Jadunath Sarkar, Brajendranath Seal, P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar, Barrister Savarkar, R. C. Majumdar, M. N. Roy, R. D. Ranade, S. Radhakrishnan, and P. N. Srinivasachari; and, among younger writers, P. T. Raju, S. Gopal, and M. N. Srinivas. Journalists, jurists, orators, writers on politics and economics, their name is almost legion; and the best among them—journalists like Frank Moraes and Chalapati Rau, jurists like Ashutosh Mukherji and Subramania Ayyar, orators like Srinivasa Sastri and C. R. Reddy, publicists like

M. Ruthnaswami and K. M. Panikkar, masters of dialectic like C. Rajagopalachari, and seasoned educationists like Dr. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar—can stand comparison with the best English or American masters of prose in the respective fields.

Of the prose writers named above, three or four stand out as masters by reason of their distinctive and forceful personality, the quality of their thought, and the marvellous adequacy of their style for the demands made upon it. The English version of Gandhiji's autobiography, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, was actually the work of Mahadeo Desai who had caught the style of the Master with a fidelity that was truly extraordinary. A serenity, a beautiful tranquillity shines on the pages of the book, as indeed on almost everything that Gandhiji wrote. There are no angularities or contortions in Gandhiji's prose: all is set down clearly; an utter simplicity, Biblical in its sufficiency, is the prevailing note of the writing, and there are no evasions, no ambiguities. It is the model of the clear and simple style, as clear and pure and healthy as fresh water.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's *Autobiography* and *Discovery of India* are the works of another supreme master of English prose. Widely and deeply read in English literature, familiar with the movements in European thought and letters, and drawing his inspiration no less from the living waters of Indian or Asian tradition, Nehru's writing in English is marked by naturalness and ease as well as a nervous sensibility and a reserve of suggestion. Of his writing it can be said that the style is indeed the man, for whether he writes or speaks, the whole man—his culture, his power, his humanity—is revealed as in a mirror, and it is a man one admires and loves at once.

Professor Radhakrishnan is another master of prose. His monumental two-volume History of Indian Philosophy set a standard for Indian philosophical writing in English. Brilliant in exposition, judicious in presenting rival systems of philosophy, persuasive in argument, Professor Radhakrishnan succeeded in giving Indian philosophy the quality of a vital and living tradition. In his later works—notably in his *An Idealist View of Life*—the constructive philosopher was more in evidence, and always it was his prose style—adequate in every sense, colourful, rich, eloquent, interspersed with choice quotations from the literatures

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of the West and the East—that carried all before it. Torrential in speech, as he is facile in writing, Professor Radhakrishnan's is an integrated personality, the pundit, the prophet, and the man of affairs being somehow fused together, and it is this fact that gives such power and grace to his English prose style.

One other writer, too, may be mentioned. Shri C. Rajagopalachari is usually considered to be the dialectician *par excellence*, but that is only part of the story. He has no doubt cultivated a severe austerity in expression, but there are also emotional and spiritual sides to his personality, and these too are reflected in his writing. Rajaji's prose is neither as seemingly colourless as Gandhiji's nor as richly evocative, as radiant with the light of life, as Nehru's. The flow of sentences is steady, theorem seems to follow theorem and an impressive argument is being built up. . . . yet, beneath the smooth surface, there may be darkling currents or unplumbed depths of suggestion. His recent adaptations of the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* have given the modern age the quintessential Vyasa and Valmiki flavoured with the spices of the current intellectual idiom.

After Independence

When World War II came to an end in 1945, people in India were unable to share the general jubilation because frustration still filled the air. The Gandhi-Jinnah talks had failed, the trial of the I.N.A. leaders and Bulabhai Desai's splendid advocacy had served to confound yet further the already confused situation in India. The formation of the Interim Government on 2nd September 1946 (exactly a year after the collapse of Japan) was a great day in our history, but the joy was mixed with regret because the Muslim League had kept sullenly aloof. The communal holocausts at Calcutta, Noakhali, Bihar and the Punjab followed as a matter of course, and in defiance of the lessons of history, in defiance of the dictates of common sense, and in defiance even of the Mahatma's intuitions and warnings, the Congress leaders agreed—being driven to sheer despair by the compulsion of the developing tragedy—to the division of the country, and so, on 15th August 1947, independent India and Pakistan were born.

Freedom had come indeed, but it was not exactly the freedom that our writers of yesterday had dreamed or sung about or the

freedom that generations of patriots had visualized and striven for. It was a flawed freedom born in the hour of communal disturbances of unprecedented ferocity and unbelievable bestiality. Tens of millions crossed the border, homes were shattered, lives were wrecked, and human values were crushed under foot. Yet, miraculously, India survived—survived even the ghastly tragedy enacted on the 30th January 1948. Indian literature has not yet got over the shocks of 1946-48: the blood of the massacred innocents, the martyrdom of the Mahatma, and the humiliation, the agony, the benumbing despair following these events; and the writers who have lived through it all find it difficult to transmute the experience into art.

As the months passed, as year followed year with monotonous regularity, as ministries changed, as new political parties emerged, as control and decontrol played hide and seek, as the nation fiddled with planning, the creative writer found that there was ample material for sarcasm, irony, comedy, farce, satire, denunciation, melodrama, but where was the material for Epics of Fulfilment or lyrics of praise? Everywhere there is visible a slackening of effort, a steady deterioration in standards; 'Chalo Delhi' is the clarion-call of the new careerism that is the rage in India today; and self-deception has assumed vast national dimensions. Although Pandit Nehru still rightly claims the homage of the nation and the world, even he is powerless in the face of the forces of opportunism and adventurism that have been let loose in the country by the fact of freedom. And the Universities, which might have been expected to give the right lead to the country, are about the worst offenders, being largely controlled by small men who have no use for independent thinking or creative values.

On the other hand, efforts are also being made with the momentum created by the Five Year Plans to canalize the creative energies of the people. The Sahitya Akademi, since its inauguration two years ago, is valiantly trying 'to educate public taste and advance the cause of literature'. Books Trusts have been established, and the Press is receiving a new charter of freedom and responsibility. Even so, it is not Akademis nor Trusts nor Charters that can ensure the creation of great literature. An authentic work of literature is a man speaking to other men: it is an exchange of pulses, an unfreezing of our petrified

selves so that soul may commune with soul and diverse minds can flow together. The quality of a literature must thus ultimately depend on the quality of the individual writer. The more men have the courage (as Professor Radhakrishnan remarked) 'to be lonely in their minds', the more writers cultivate the strength to withstand the pressure of politics, patronage and propaganda or the lure of novelty and the gymnastics of mere technique, the more are they likely to succeed in transmuting their ambrosial visions into abiding art.

One of the supreme events of the Era of Independence was the publication of Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*: *A Legend and a Symbol* in 1950-51. Begun late in the nineties, almost contemporaneously with *Urvasie* and *Love and Death*, *Savitri* was fifty years a-growing, undergoing numerous revisions, now taken up, now set aside, anon forged in the fire of a new inspiration into a marvellous splendour of revelation. In the final form, this blank verse epic consists of 3 parts, divided into 12 books or 48 cantos, making up a total of about 24,000 lines. The story is the familiar *Mahabharata* story of Savitri and Satyavan, but Sri Aurobindo has given it a mystical colouring and transcendence, and perhaps future literary historians will hail it as the greatest English epic after *Paradise Lost*. In his illuminating treatise, *The Future Poetry*, Sri Aurobindo tried nearly forty years ago to indicate the possible extended frontiers of the poetry of the future. If poetry at its purest is verily soul speaking to soul, the more the middle terms are minimized, the better for the communication of poetry. Before the intellect supervenes to dissociate the images, anatomize the sentences, or exercise itself in semantics, the poetic utterance must have achieved instantaneous communication, as a tune strikes the ear, as light embraces the object, as the *mantra* sinks into one's soul. The poetic word is no shorthand substitute for thought, it is in itself a spark of creative life, and to be able to forge again and again the unique poetic word is the challenge to the new poet. The great aim behind the composition of *Savitri* was to articulate in terms of poetry the promise of the Life Divine on earth, and indeed the poem with its incandescent light of knowledge, its vast reserves of controlled energy and its superb rhythms of creative life may verily be described as 'a flame from earth and yet the heavenly messenger of the Immortals'.

Apart from Sri Aurobindo, others who have come under his inspiration are also helping to swell the current of the new poetry of the Spirit. K. D. Sethna's *The Adventure of the Apocalypse* (1949), like his earlier *The Secret Splendour*, is the recordation of his vivid experience of occult realities and spiritual truths. Dilip Kumar Roy's *Eyes of Light* (1948) contains a long philosophical poem based on the Prahlad story in the *Bhagavata*, and many lyrics deriving their impulsion from his Yoga and therefore acquiring the character of a continuous revelation. Nirodbaran's *Sub-Blossoms* (1947) has been described 'as a definite milestone on the slowly unfolding path of the evolution of the future poetry'. Nolini Kanta Gupta (*To the Heights*), Nishikanto (*Dream Cadences*), Punjalal (*Rosary* and *Lotus Petals*), Prithwindra, Romen and Tehmi are among the other poets who owe their main inspiration to Sri Aurobindo. Mystic poetry like the above is in no sense escapist. Genuine mysticism really offers a corrective to an age that has seemingly lost its standards and sense of values. To return to the ground—the root-of-all, the seed-of-all—is the one sure way of renewal, and it is the cardinal purpose of the Aurobindonian school of poetry to project before us in the accents of *mantra* a vision of the New Man and the New World arising out of the ambiguous frustrated present.

In fiction, too, a spiritual slant is noticeable in so unusual a novel as Dilip Kumar Roy's *The Upward Spiral* (1949). It is an imaginative essay on the mechanics of aspiration and realization, and although the discussions are apt to be tedious, the underlying Yogic purpose holds all together. On the other hand, the fact of political independence, the new national consciousness, the strides taken during the last decade by the regional languages, have not appreciably affected either the volume or the quality of Indian writing in English. In some fields, perhaps, the vogue for English is greater than ever. Freedom, partition, planning: these have given this age its special stir and sense of striving. A significant age, this, with its excitements, ardours, and achievements—also its set-backs, frustrations, and humiliations. What an invitation to the creative writer, and especially the novelist! A challenge, as well as a glorious opportunity. Who would catch, like the chance drizzle in the sunshine, the multi-coloured view of the nation awaking from its long nightmarish past? Who would record our epics of achievement, who would indicate the

lyrics of high endeavour, the satires of self-deception, or the grim elegies of failure ?

While some of the writers of fiction who won recognition in the thirties and early forties—Anand, Narayan—have retained their fecundity and popularity, the new 'arrivals'—Bhabani Bhattacharya, Kamala Markhandaya, Khushwant Singh, Shanta Rama Rau, Sudhin Ghose and the rest—have given the contemporary literary scene both the glow of variegated excitement and the promise of sure achievement. No doubt the valiant struggle for independence highlights many of these latter-day fictional experiments, notably Venu Chitale's *In Transit* (1951), Ahmad Abbas's *Inquilab*, Bhabani Bhattacharya's *So Many Hungers* (1948), Kamala Markhandaya's *Some Inner Fury* and Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*, while Lambert Mascarenhas's *Sorrowing Lies My Land* tells the story of Goa's fight for liberation from the horrors of Portuguese rule. Peasant life, urban sophistication, the clash between the haves and have-nots, the seeming gulf between the West and the East, and the opposing pulls of tradition and revolt give sustenance to other contemporary novels, and still others traffic successfully in fantasy. Thus Purushottam Tricamdas has written a tantalizing yarn by imagining the grafting of the head of one person on the body of another, and pursuing the consequent psychological possibilities; *The Living Mask* is thus a novel that teases and grips at once. Sudhin Ghose's *The Vermilion Boat, And Gazelles Leaping* and *The Flame of the Forest* are all touched with an oriental quaintness which—despite the growing thinness of content and dilution of the essence—is at once amusing and satisfying. And there is also G. V. Desani, author of *All About Mr. Hatter*, a work obviously inspired by James Joyce.

Dr Bhabani Bhattacharya's three novels—*So Many Hungers, Music for Mohini* and *He Who Rides a Tiger* (1954)—have now securely established his position as a writer of creative fiction. *So Many Hungers* evokes the war years in Bengal with pitiless realism, and has enjoyed a world vogue as a best-seller. *Music for Mohini* is the sensitive story of a young Brahmin girl, Mohini, who tries to make a success of her married life with Jayadev, her scholar-husband. *He Who Rides a Tiger*, also located in famine-ridden Bengal, is lighter in tone, and Kalo's practical joke on Society is pure entertainment. The tempo of life in Calcutta,

the complex of urban vices and urban sophistication, the pressure of mass movements and mass hysteria, all give this novel a piquant quality all its own. As a novelist, Bhattacharya is dowered with many gifts : a satirical humour, a social conscience, a feeling for nuances in character, and, above all, a fierce compassion for suffering in all its forms.

Kamala Markhandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* and *Some Inner Fury* (1956) recall the late K. S. Venkataramani's *Murugan the Tiller* and *Kandan the Patriot* respectively. *Nectar in a Sieve* is the story of village folk—the apparently hopeless story of helpless people reeling under the impact of industrialism and modern technology —but Rukmini the narrator-heroine is drawn firmly, and she is revealed (or, rather, she reveals herself) as the veritable Mother of Sorrows. *Some Inner Fury* tackles a more difficult theme, the love of an Indian girl for an Englishman in the context of the 'fight to a finish' launched in August 1942. *Some Inner Fury* is a tragedy of politics, even as the earlier novel is a tragedy of Indian economics, but in both novels the chief characters transcend the bludgeonings of economic or political mischance and assert the unconquerable spirit of man. Not the least of Kamala Markhandaya's claims to recognition is the purity and suggestiveness of her prose.

Shanta Rama Rau's *Remember the House* is a first novel of great promise. We watch the growth of Bala, the girl-narrator, and as life brings new opportunities to her, it also sharpens her awareness. But she profits by failure and disillusion as much as from success and elation. Romance beckons, but actuality holds her back; novelty is exciting, but tradition is not easy to shake off. Nayantara Sahgal, who gave us a charming autobiographical essay in *Prison and Chocolate Cake* (1954), has just published a novel, *A Time to be Happy* (1957), covering the years before independence; the Shaivals and the Sahais form two clearly distinguished groups, and we have a good story as well as a picture of an epoch. In Anand Lall's *The House at Adampur*, the veil is lifted from 'aristocratic' life in pre-1947 Delhi, and the Panjab generally. Contradictions then kept house together, men oscillated between different worlds, and viperous discontent crawled like a worm within. M. V. Rama Sharma's *The Stream*, on the other hand, is a study of Gopalam the obscure, who is caught—somewhat like Hardy's Jude—between two women,

and cannot easily achieve a wholly satisfying relation with either of them. S. Y. Krishnaswamy's *Kalyani's Husband* (1947), too, vaguely recalls Hardy—Fitzpiers of *The Woodlanders*. Sekhar, Kalyani's husband, is an interesting study no doubt, but hardly convincing. Sekhar reminds us of another Mylapore fallen archangel, Venkataramani's Kedari (in *Murugan the Tiller*); but neither in evoking the *genius loci* of Mylapore nor in rendering the intertwining contradictions of the hero is Krishnaswamy quite as successful as his predecessor.

Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1956) stands apart—a terrible reminder of the hells let loose in the Panjab at the time of the fateful partition of India. The arbitrary cutting of a country into two was an act of evil, and evil engendered more and still more evil. Once the wind of communal difference had been sown, how was one to escape the whirlwind that uprooted masses of humanity, mangled them, and threw them aside in a heap ? Crime—reprisal—more crime. Was the chain reaction to go on indefinitely ? But man's normal nature is love, not hate; and after the violence of the storm is spent, calm must descend at last. The ruffian Juggat Singh loves the Muslim girl, Nooran, and at the cost of his own life he, a Sikh, saves a train carrying her along with numerous other Muslim refugees from India to Pakistan. An anti-romantic, Khushwant Singh is intolerant of cant and humbug, especially when they masquerade as wisdom and probity. This is seen, not alone in his 'blood and tears' novel, but also in *The Mark of Vishnu*, a collection of short stories. Isvaran's *Painted Tigers* is another noteworthy recent collection of short stories.

Novels and short stories are appearing at a steady pace, for journals need them, and readers are hungry for them. Besides, American and English publishers are not unwilling to encourage good fiction by Indian writers of English. But there is a difference between the well made novel or short story and the piece of imaginative fiction that seems as it were to have demanded utterance. It is true that the novels mentioned above, however exciting or satisfying for one or another reason, have not been able to seize our struggle for freedom in a splendorous act of creative comprehension, and hence it is for the novelist of tomorrow to give us an epic in prose comparable to Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. Many should write before a few stand out from

the crowd. However, the future of Indo-Anglian fiction will be assured so long as novelists and short-story writers like those named above are irresistibly lured to the ranks of its practitioners. The conflict between the West and the East or between Innovation and Tradition—a conflict that may be presented at different levels—is a perennial theme, and novelists and dramatists are sure to be attracted by it in the future as in the past.

A word or two before I conclude about the Indian journals in English. In the early days of our national renaissance, papers like 'The Hindu' (Madras) and 'Amrita Bazar Patrika' (Calcutta) played a notable part in educating and mobilizing public opinion on the issue of progressive self-government; it is gratifying to find that they are still flourishing national institutions. Other papers that once commanded high prestige or enjoyed a great vogue—for example, the 'Indu Prakash' (Bombay) and 'Bandemataram' (Calcutta)—now belong to history, not actuality. National leaders like Sri Aurobindo ('Bandemataram' and 'Karmayogin'), Lajpat Rai ('The People'), C. R. Das ('Forward'), Gandhiji ('Young India' and 'Harijan'), C. Y. Chintamani ('The Leader'), Pattabhi Sitaramayya ('Janmabhumi'), Subhas Bose ('Forward Bloc'), M. N. Roy ('Independent India' and 'The Marxian Way'), Lokamanya Tilak ('The Mahratta'), Acharya Kripalani ('Vigil'), and K. M. Munshi ('The Social Welfare') have in their time made their journals efficient organs for the dissemination of their views. In our own time, daily newspapers like 'The Hindu', 'The Patrika', the 'Indian Express', the 'Hindustan Times', the 'Bombay Chronicle' and the 'National Herald', as also the so-called 'Anglo-Indian' papers of yesterday—the 'Times of India', the 'Statesman' and the 'Mail'—that have wonderfully adjusted themselves to the altered conditions of republican India, are all doing yeoman service by maintaining good journalistic standards and generally viewing questions from a progressive and all-India or national standpoint. The weekly papers—excepting for the ever popular 'Illustrated Weekly'—are less firmly established as a rule, although at one time papers like the 'Indian Social Reformer' and 'The Servant of India' enjoyed no mean prestige in the country. Even so, there are papers today like 'Mysindia' (Bangalore), 'Thought' (Delhi), 'Swarajya' (Madras) and the 'Radical Humanist' (Calcutta) that are playing a useful role in our national life, presenting

whenever necessary the 'minority' view with clarity and vigour. There are the monthly journals, too, sharing the difficulties of the tribe in other parts of the world. The 'Calcutta Review', the 'Modern Review' and the 'Indian Review' have had a long and useful history; 'Prabuddha Bharata', 'Vedanta Kesari' and 'Mother India' continue to maintain a good standard, but with a Vedantic and spiritual slant; and 'The Aryan Path' has completed nearly 30 years of truly meritorious service, addressing itself to the task of dissemination of the abiding values and verities and also to the task of building up, through its review section, a sound critical tradition in the country. Nor must I omit to mention the quarterly or bi-monthly journals, like the 'Visvabharati Quarterly', the 'Quest' (Bombay), the 'Advent' (Pondicherry), and the 'Literary Criterion' (Mysore). There are, besides, the 'learned' journals, published by the Universities or other learned bodies, and these also try to maintain standards appropriate to such journals.

Poetry or drama, novel or short story, history or biography, philosophical or political treatise, oratory or journalism, Indian writing in English shows no signs whatsoever either of exhaustion or inanity. There is no doubt that, with its own individual vision and voice, Indo-Anglian literature will grow—like other literatures of contemporary India—from strength to greater strength, and help to make us a new nation and a new people, a modern nation and a progressive people, wedded to the tasks of national reconstruction and international harmony.

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GUJARATI LITERATURE

MANSUKHLAL JHAVERI

INTRODUCTION

GUJARATI is the language of the people of Gujarat, a region on the west coast of India. That region comprises the part known as Gujarat till now, Saurashtra and Kutch. It has a total population of over 15 millions.

Gujarati language is derived from Sanskrit, through the intermediate stages of Saurasenī Prakrit and Gaurjara Apabhramsa. Gujarati had started assuming its distinct character since about A. D. 1200, but it came to be known by this particular name only in the 17th century, after the province came to be known as Gujarat.

Kavi Narmadashankar or Narmad as he is popularly called is rightly said to be the Father of Modern Gujarati literature. Not that there was no literature before Narmad: Gujarat did have its literature even before the days of Narasimha Maheta, the Chaucer of Gujarati poetry. During the period of four centuries, from A.D. 1414 to 1852, Gujarat has had scores of poets, six at least of whom have established their claim to the first rank of Gujarati writers of all time.

In the 15th century we have Narasimha Maheta and Mira Bai, two of the most distinguished of Gujarati Bhakta poets. In the 17th century we have that brilliant trio—Akho, Premananda and Samala—Akho, the goldsmith, a master of satire, caustic criticism and fearless exposure; Premananda, the Akhyana poet, the supreme master in delineating the various *rasas* in Gujarati poetry; and Samala, the first able writer among the ancients to leave aside the beaten track and fully exploit the field of romantic fiction. In the latter half of the 18th century we have the melodious Dayarama, whose *garbis* have won him a place among the immortal lyricists of Gujarat. Over and above these six masters among the mediaeval Gujarati poets, we have Bhalana, setting the welcome tradition of free translation; Padmanabha depicting the historical *Vīra Rasa* in his *Kānhada-de Prabandha*; Bhima, singing about the exploits of Shri Krishna on the model of the *Bhagavata Purana*; Dhiro and Bhojo emphasizing

the futility of this life; and the poets of the Svaminarayana Sect repeatedly stressing the importance of human body as the only means to attain godliness and salvation.

But during that long period of four centuries, poetry generally remains devoid of the touch of mundane reality and of the infinite range of life. It does sing of love, but that love is monopolized by the divine Radha and Krishna. That which is not sectarian is usually fanciful and airy. Poetry, thus, flowing into the old traditional rut of *Jnana*, *Bhakti* and *Vairagya*, gets frozen and practically dead by the end of the 18th century.

The life of Gujarat, too, got stagnant and cheerless by about the end of the 18th century. With the death of the Nawab of Surat in 1799 and with the opening of the first Missionary School at Serampore in the same year, the old order had started to change and yield its place to new. From 1818 to 1857 the roots of British power in India were steadily getting deep and firm.

Impact of the West

Along with the British rule, came the powerful current of Western Civilization. Inventions of science annihilated the distances and widened peoples' mental horizon. Local political unrest came to an end and the youths of Gujarat plunged headlong into the activities of social reform to fight tooth and nail illiteracy, superstition, child-marriage, child-widowhood and age-disparity in marriage. The West, of course, was to be the model and the ideal.

The literature of that period of which Narmad (1833-1886) became a typical representative finds for the first time full and unfettered play of the element of subjectivity in poetry and the growth and development of historical romance, social satire, allegory, essay, biography and autobiography, drama and literary criticism in prose.

With the death of Narmad in 1886 sets in the age of Govardhanram (1855-1907). It was in this period that a synthesis of all that was best in the Eastern and the Western cultures was sought to be worked out. That synthesis was, of course, not to be just a mechanical combination; but its basis was to be the culture of the East and only those elements which were indispensable were to be brought in from the West and

grafted on it. This was an age of reflective thinkers, whose characteristic qualities were high seriousness and level-headedness. They believed that it was Reason—and not unquestioning faith nor mere tradition—that should be the guide of man's thought and action. And it is from this point of view that they analysed and discussed fundamental problems of their day in such a way that it would neither give a shock to the orthodox nor repel and drive away the youngsters.

This period (1886-1914) witnesses the birth of the short story in prose and that of the *Khanda-kavya*, the sonnet and the elegy in verse. *Sarasvatichandra*, a novel in four parts and the greatest literary achievement in Gujarati language, is a product of this period. It is this period that gave *Bhadrambhadra*, the only humorous novel in Gujarati. The essay, the drama, the dialogue and the letter are some of the other forms in prose which developed in this period. Standard translations of Sanskrit and English masterpieces contributed to the enrichment of literature and the Gujarati stage developed and reached its zenith in this period. It is this period which is rich with the poetry of Nanalal, Kant, Kalapi, Balwantrai and Narsimhrao; and it is this period that witnessed a number of experiments in blank verse in Gujarati. Much valuable work in the fields of philology, historical research, grammar, prosody and literary criticism had been done in this period of which Manilal Dvivedi, Anandshankar and Keshavlal Dhruv, among others, are worthy representatives.

Gandhian Era

1914 is the year of destiny in Gujarati literature. It was in that year that Mahatma Gandhi returned from Africa, and in the course of a few months electrified the atmosphere of the Indian sub-continent. Gandhiji, the Home-Rule movement and the Jallianwalla episode at home, and the First World War, its after-effects and the Russian Revolution abroad, touched to the very core the emotional life of Gujarat. The heart of Gujarat became infused with the spirit of freedom—freedom not only in the political field, but in religious, economic, social and literary fields as well. Gujarat pulsated with a life that was new.

In the field of literature this period saw the celebration of the birth and death anniversaries of prominent literary men, literary discourses, *Sharadutsavas* and *Vasantotsavas*, art exhibitions and

debates and gatherings to hear folk-lores and folk-songs. It witnessed the birth of the amateur stage as well.

The writer of the Gandhian era has seen life at various angles. The intolerable situation resulting from economic inequality is an eyesore to him. Inspired by Gandhiji's message for the service of the humble and the lowly, for the uplift of villages and for the eradication of untouchability, he ceases to concentrate only on the rich and turns towards the poor and illiterate people residing in rural India.

On the creative side of prose literature, the writer of the Gandhian era became extra-careful for the element of art in his writings. Novels of this period, are, therefore, different in subject matter and style from those of the preceding one. The short story, as an independent form of literature, came into its own during this period. Light essays, one-act plays, monologues and diaries were born and research in folk-lore and literature for children, science, economics, agriculture and such other subjects developed to a considerable extent in this period. The range of subject-matter thus widened and the style and presentation, too, underwent a complete change. Literature of the preceding Govardhan era was written in a style which was more or less ornamental and artificial. It was generally meant for highbrow scholars. In the Gandhian era, the language was shorn of all verbiage and hyperbole; and a prose style, simple, direct, natural, yet capable of expressing every shade of meaning, came into existence. The literature of the Gandhian era aimed at appealing not to the classes alone, but to the masses as well.

In the field of poetry, *ras*, *garbi*, *khanda-kavya*, sonnet, parody, elegy, dialogue in verse and *muktak* were the forms which were either born or which acquired maturity during this period. Of all these forms, special mention must be made of satirical poems written in the *akhyan* style.

The poet of the Gandhian era did not confine himself to the sphere of love, nature and God. He chanted songs of universal love and universal brotherhood. Even death appeared to him to have a niche in the pattern of life; and he saw that pathos and misery too have, like beauty, their place in the scheme of things.

Till 1914 it was generally believed that the cloud, the moon, the mountains, the stars, the lotus, the cuckoo and similar beauti-

ful or grand objects were the subjects appropriate for poetry. As a reaction to this, poems were also written on a pig, a scavenger, artificial flowers, a latrine-fly, a dung-hill, a thrown-away mango-seed, a boot-polish boy and the like. This was because the poet realized that greatness or grandeur of poetry lay not in the greatness or grandeur of the subject itself, but in the approach and attitude of the poet towards the subject. For a time, however, novelty was pursued for its own sake in some quarters. In view of the ever-widening and all-embracing range of human sympathy, this was inevitable to a certain extent. Naked realism —and sometimes obscenity and vulgarity too—became, therefore, a feature not unusual in the literature of the day.

INDEPENDENCE AND AFTER

15th August 1947 opened a new and glorious chapter in the long and chequered history of India. The distinction between pre-Independence and post-Independence literature in Gujarati is not, however, so sharp as to warrant the latter's description as a new age. The poets, novelists, short story writers, playwrights and essayists who used to hold the stage before 1947, are still active and continue to dominate the field.

In the pre-Independence period poetry was generally imbued with the spirit of freedom. The Gujarati poet had, so to say, completely given himself over to it. Freedom was the key-note of his poetry. His songs, lyrics, ballads and longer narrative or reflective poems were all, one way or the other, infused with this spirit. Even from history and mythology, he selected only those incidents and themes which reflected his yearnings and aspirations. To him the goal was clear; and all man's energies were, without fail, to be diverted in that one direction.

In the post-Independence period, that urge for freedom no longer exists and there is no other distinct goal before him to absorb all his attention at present. Colossal movements for national reconstruction are going on in the country. But somehow or other, they do not seem to have enthused him to any appreciable degree. This is, perhaps, not a place to go into the reasons for this general apathy. But one can definitely say that the contemporary Gujarati poet has so far failed to respond to these movements with the same intensity with which his predecessor 25 years ago responded to the call of freedom from the foreign yoke.

So far as the subject-matter is concerned, Gujarati poetry attempts to have within its compass the entire world. It tries to touch the best and the noblest of its elements and to assimilate the finest spirit of Beauty. To the Gujarati poet of the Gandhian era, as well as to the poet of today, all expressions of life are equally sacred and equally worthy of respect.

About 25 years ago, there was a time when the relation between poetry and music was almost on the breaking point, as music was considered in some quarters not conducive to the health and vitality of poetry. Fortunately, the poets freed themselves from this illusion very soon and continued writing beautiful songs, along with their poems in chaste Sanskrit metres. Poets of present-day Gujarat have achieved greater measure of success in their songs. Contemporary poetry, thus, seems to lean more towards music and song than towards classical Sanskrit metres.

Longer narrative or reflective poems cannot, naturally, have any irresistible appeal to a poet in these circumstances. But a song can, at best, express a mood or an emotion; it cannot easily be a vehicle for expressing subtle and abstract thought. The Gujarati poet seems to have given up, at least for the time being, any attempt at writing epic poetry. I should not like, however, to subscribe to the view that this is due to the absence of some suitable metre like the blank verse. It would be nearer the truth to admit that we have, so far, not been able to produce a poet of genuine epic genius.

Of the old guard in the field of poetry, Umashankar Joshi, Sundaram and Sundarji Betai are still active. Umashankar, perhaps the most versatile writer of the present generation, has come out, only a few months ago, with his *Vasanta Varsha*, the fifth collection of his poems. In some of the songs of this collection he has captured various moods of nature and sung of her joys and sorrows in a superb lyrical strain. The *Yatra* of Sundaram, published some years ago, is an artistic record of the poet's progress in the realm of spirit. Sundaram has no longer remained the poet of *Vasudha* (The Earth). He is now a traveller in the realm of mystical experiences which are intensely personal. Umashankar bursts forth into lyricism at the sight of the enchanting beauty of the Mother Earth. Sundaram soars high in the realm of philosophy at the sight of the beauty within. Both seek the ultimate truth, but the one wishes to realize it in the

form of beauty, the other through the medium of Yoga. The sobriety and dignified restraint of the *Visheshanjali* of Betai bear a distinct mark of the author's personality. Other poets of the same generation who deserve mention are Sneharashmi, Poojalal, Karsandas Manek and Krishnalal Shridharani.

Of the poets of the new generation mention must be made of Rajendra Shah, Niranjan Bhagat, Balmukund Dave, Venibhai Purohit and Ushanas. Rajendra by the richness of his imagery and clarity of vision, Niranjan by his unusual sense of rhythm and bold, unconventional approach to matter and manner, Balmukund by his sweetness, Venibhai by his melodious lucidity and Ushanas by his picturization represent the new era of poetry in Gujarat. Makarand Dave, Prajaram, Jayant Pathak, Pinakin Thakore and Priyakant Maniar, too, among others, have made their mark in the field of contemporary poetry.

Having nothing in particular to claim his whole-hearted enthusiasm, the young Gujarati poet of today has turned once again to the age-old themes of love and nature. His love, of course, is youthful, and hence strongly passionate, sweet and fresh. It has not yet known the tragedy of love, unresponded or otherwise. It has still to fathom the innermost recesses of the human heart.

The present-day poet has shown a command over metre and rhythm which may be called remarkable. His vocabulary, too, is rich and he is no amateur in his rhyme-scheme. But he sometimes fumbles in his use of Sanskrit words; or uses words of incomplete predication. Sometimes he is merely witty and his poem is only a play of words. Sometimes it is only rhythm and nothing else. Sometimes his poetic vision comes to an abrupt end before it could fully mature, and sometimes the poet finds it difficult to go beyond a *muktak* or an epigram. Long, well-knit poems, rich in thought, imagery and vision are, of course, not an every-day affair in any literature. Their paucity in contemporary Gujarati poetry need not, therefore, worry us. But one cannot help taking note of the fact that the present-day poetry tends generally to be short, sweet, musical and lucid. Depth, width, and length—these dimensions the poetry of today has still to acquire. So far as the philosophical vision is concerned, this generation has not still covered any new ground.

Of the several forms that are being developed today, the most

remarkable one is that of *Natya Rupak*. *Natya Rupak* is neither a full-fledged drama nor a longer narrative poem. It deals with a single dramatic situation, significant and pregnant with the mystery of life, and presents it in the form of a dialogue in verse. Umashankar Joshi has given us some of the most exquisite models of this form in his *Prachina*.

Then, there is the form of the *Dance Ballet* or the *Nritya Rupak* as it is generally called in Gujarat. That, too, is a form of recent origin. It is composed of songs interlinked by a commentary in prose or in a metre like the *Anushthubh*. The theme selected for such *ballets* is, generally, mythological, historical or legendary and the songs are designed to express the various moods or the important stages in the development of the plot. The success of these *ballets* is, of course, dependent not so much on their inherent poetic worth as on the rhythmic beauty of human forms and music. It has, more or less, been a fashion of these days to stage a *Nritya Rupak* in annual concerts presented by cultural societies and educational institutions. Popular entertainment being their immediate goal, very few of them show any preference for presenting the dances or music in their chaste classical form.

Kavi Sammelans and *Mushairas* (literary gatherings where poets recite their compositions), too, have continued to remain fairly popular. Poems written in classical Sanskrit metres or *Mātrā Vrittas* are presented in *Kavi Sammelans*; while poems written in the style of Urdu ghazals are recited at the *Mushairas*. These activities have, no doubt, been able to create a sort of an interest for poetry in the minds of the public at large; but it is doubtful whether they have been able to enhance man's capacity to understand and appreciate poetry of a very high order. Being meant for immediate consumption, poems presented in such gatherings cannot, naturally, afford to have those subtle nuances of language depicting various shades of emotion or thought which require careful concentration and revision for their proper appreciation. Much of the success of poems meant for such gatherings depends on the art of recitation and brilliant play on words. It is, therefore, not quite seldom that a poem winning thunderous applause in a *Kavi Sammelan* or a *Mushaira* may not find the same favour with competent and discriminating persons when they read it in cold print.

Novel

There have not been any new developments in the form of the novel, even though it is perhaps the most popular form in Gujarati literature. Novel in Gujarati is one form which can be cited as an illustration of the fact that popularity and merit do not always go together. Munshi, Ramanlal Desai, Jhaverchand Meghani, Gunvantrai Acharya, Dhumketu and Chunilal V. Shah of the older generation and Pannalal Patel, Darshak, Ishvar Petlikar, Chunilal Madia, Sopan, Pitamber Patel and Sarang Barot, among others, of the modern generation—there are quite a number of novelists in Gujarat. All of them are fairly popular too and some of them are best-sellers as well. Still, world-standards apart, Gujarati literature has only a few novels of high calibre to offer. Ramanlal Desai and Jhaverchand Meghani are dead. Munshi has not been able to outgrow adolescence. Pannalal Patel and Darshak (Manubhai Pancholi) are two authors whose contribution to Gujarati novel can be said to be important. Pannalal has depicted the Gujarati village almost to perfection. He knows his village to the very core, its simple hard-working folk, with their admixture of love and hatred, nobility and meanness, warmth and cold-bloodedness, straight-forwardness and intrigues, an entire world in itself, full of pathos and poignancy. His *Malela Jīv* and *Manvi-ni-Bhavai* are master-pieces which Gujarat would not let willingly die. But when he steps into the boundaries of urban life, he is just a stranger.

Darshak, another novelist of note, is a man of erudition and culture. He is a reflective thinker as well as an excellent story-teller. He has a philosophy of life which he tries to convey through the medium of his novels ; and it is because of this philosophy that his novels have made a special mark. Ishvar Petlikar's masterly portraits of the patidars of Charotar in Gujarat, too, need a special reference.

In the historical novel, there is still the tendency to glorify and glamourize the past. During the days of British domination, perhaps as a necessary part of the struggle for freedom, and as a means to instill a sense of self-respect among the people, the tendency to present artistically only admirable aspects of the past was naturally encouraged. The past was thus generally deified and treated by writers like Jhaverchand Meghani as an age of everything that was noblest and best in our culture. Or

in order to treat it as a source of inspiration, reflections of contemporary problems and socio-political conditions were sought to be read in it by writers like Munshi. Writers like Dhumketu in their enthusiasm sometimes overreached the target and presented as admirable certain traits or incidents from the past that were really not so. Few writers, if any, attempted objectively to present the past as a way of life as it was once lived and out of which the present has grown.

Historical evidence not only keeps on shifting but is, more or less, a matter of interpretation. A coin, a stone, a page of an old worn-out manuscript, a little something or other, is just enough to change the entire perspective, and thus there can hardly be any finality as regards the verdict of history. But even so, the past has an unmistakable identity of its own, and nations, like individuals, love to see the photographs of the years gone by. In those photographs they may not appear as beautiful as they might wish to ; they might, perhaps, appear even ugly. Nevertheless, they are *their* photographs. They are reminiscent of that part of their life which was once real and which is so very vitally connected with their personality. They must needs, therefore, have a place in the family album.

If the Gujarati novelist turns to the past with a view to glamourize it, he turns towards his contemporary society generally with a view to criticise it. Either he is so much enamoured of the past that he finds his present dull, drab and dimunitive, or he is so much fed up with the smallness of the people around him that he automatically turns to the past to have a glimpse of nobility, courage, greatness and grandeur. Really speaking, the present is not that bad. Since the return of Gandhiji from Africa in 1914, the spirit of Gujarat has undergone a complete metamorphosis. In culture and literature, courage and fortitude, heroism, sacrifice and enterprise, Gujarat too has a modest claim to make. The Gujarati writer's attitude towards the contemporary society, as evidenced in his works, is therefore more a measure of his idealism, his hankering for something better, than of the actual corruption around him.

Short Story

Short story is a form which is barely 60 years old. It came at a later stage, much later than the drama, the novel and even the

early attempts at the blank verse. Even so it has firmly implanted itself in the soil of Gujarat; and with the sole exception of the novel, it is the only form which finds greatest favour today with the author and the reader alike.

Of the old guards Dhumketu has, of late, switched over to the writing of novels. His later short stories have hardly anything to add to the reputation which the first two parts of the *Tankha* brought to him. Jhaverchand Meghani and Ramnarayan Pathak (Dwiref) are no longer with us. Munshi has practically stopped writing short stories; and so have Dhansukhlal Mehta, Umashankar Joshi (Vasuki) and Sundaram (Trishool). Of the rest, Gulabdas Broker and Pannalal Patel are still in the field. Gulabdas Broker, with his wonderful insight into human nature, goes on creating things of beauty from apparently simple and ordinary experiences of life. And Pannalal Patel is still at his best when he is depicting his village.

Of the writers who came after them, Jayanti Dalal, with his penetrating insight and caustic satire, still goes on with his bold experiments in form and matter. Vinodini Nilkanth with her picturesque portraiture, Ishvar Petlikar with his moving simplicity, Chunilal Madia, perhaps the most prolific writer of the group, with his powerful pen-pictures and Kisansinha Chavda with his irresistible fascination for beauty, are still there in the field.

Of the recent arrivals, mention must be made of the names of Ketan Munshi, whose tragic death took place in March 1956, Venibhai Purohit, Ramanlal Pathak and Shivkumar Joshi.

Following closely the technique of the short story, true story also has come into vogue in Gujarat for the past few years. It tries to bring out the drama in real life in a very artistic form. True stories of this type written by Jhaverchand Meghani, Kisansinha Chavda, Gulabdas Broker and G. V. Mavlankar aim, not at creating sensation, but at bringing to light the brighter and nobler side of human nature.

The theme that generally appeals to the average short story writer in Gujarat is the social evil. Poverty, illiteracy, jealousy and sex are among the few topics that find favour with the budding author. One does, of course, come across, here and there, stories of travel and enterprise, hunting expedition and themes remote from mundane reality. But they are a mere sprinkling.

The great 1942 movement, the man-made famine of Bengal, the Independence, the partition of the country and the consequent ghastly tragedy of uprooted humanity, the First Five Year Plan and the Nation's heroic endeavour to rise and rejuvenate itself—these upheavals at home and the ravages of the Second World War and its aftermath abroad, have yet to stir powerfully and adequately the imagination of the Gujarati writer of any real talent.

Gujaratis are among the most enterprising people of India. Since old times they have spread far and wide, in every nook and corner of the world. They, perhaps, are the first to penetrate deep into places dangerous for human habitation and settle there. Being essentially men of business—with no Imperial Preference to protect their interests—they are masters in human relations, and they have an infinite capacity to adapt themselves to any environment. Even then, very few of them have written good stories about persons and places not belonging to Gujarat. I should not like to discuss at this place whether this is good or bad. Nor would I like to consider whether this is peculiar to Gujaratis alone. I merely wish to record here, without comments, the state of affairs as I find it.

Drama

The stage, too, like the novel and the short story, owes its origin and development mainly to the influence of the British. The Gujarati drama, from the very beginning an admixture of the characteristics of the English and the Sanskrit drama, bears a greater impact of the English drama—particularly of Shakespeare—than that of the Sanskrit plays.

For some years in the beginning, prominent literary men used to write dramas for the stage. But then came a long period of complete divorce between literary drama and the drama meant for the stage. Literary men of recognized merit had no eye for the stage; and the professional writers of dramas for the stage had no great love for literature. About 25 years ago, a couple of literary dramas were acted on the stage by prominent professional artists. But it was just an essay in mutual condescension. Literature and stage continued to live in splendid isolation, poles apart from each other.

But times were rapidly changing and in order to survive the

onslaught of the cinema and other attractive means of entertainment, the professional stage went on adapting itself to the changing circumstances. Dramas were written on themes of contemporary interest. Women were induced to play the role of female characters. Innovations were made in the presentation of dance and music. Some of the professional companies even went to the extent of staging two or three one-act plays instead of one full-length drama. This experiment did not find favour with their patrons. They have, therefore, reverted to their original course.

The period after 1914 witnessed the birth of the amateur stage. Chandravadan Mehta and K. M. Munshi, among others, rendered yeoman service in popularizing this activity. They did succeed in creating an interest for dramatic activities among the educated class. But in their attempt to popularize the amateur stage, these pioneers could not rise much above the popular level. Many of the pieces they staged were either cheap melodramatic stuff or broad incongruous farce. This went on for quite a number of years.

In the meanwhile the movement of the amateur stage went on gathering momentum; and places like Ahmedabad, Surat, Baroda and Rajkot hummed with activities. Groups of persons seriously interested in drama and stage technique were being formed. New plays—not necessarily farcical or humorous skits—were being written. Translations and adaptations from languages like English and Bengali were also encouraged and the amateur stage was rapidly coming into its own.

The progress made by the amateur stage in Gujarat during the last several years is something wonderful. So far as the histrionic talent is concerned, the standard is very high. The standard of production, too, has considerably gone up. And the audience, too, is becoming more judicious and discriminating. The only handicap that faces the amateur stage is the shortage of good scripts. School and College associations generally prefer to produce farces and humorous pieces of very ordinary calibre. Other associations generally depend upon translations and adaptations from other languages. There is a shortage of first-class dramas originally written in Gujarati and the translations and adaptations that exist are not necessarily those of the masterpieces in literature. The talent and resources of the amateur stage in Gujarat certainly deserve better fare.

On the side of literary dramas, the writing of full-length plays has practically come to an end. Gujarat has not produced a play of really high literary merits after *Rai-no Parvat*, which was published in 1914. The lyrical drama, which Nanalal sought to introduce, has also not been able to grow into the soil of Gujarat. There have been some admirable attempts at writing dramas in verse. But the richest part of dramatic literature in Gujarat is the one-act play. This particular form has achieved a considerable measure of success since the days when Batubhai Umarwadia, Yashwant Pandya and Pranjivan Pathak first brought it in Gujarati literature. In form, as well as in matter, the one-act play has a rich variety to offer. Umashankar Joshi has depicted an entire village of Gujarat in perfect light and shade and the tragedy that is the life of a woman, in his *Sap-na Bhara*; and the hypocrisy and ugliness of the present day civilization in his *Shaheed ane Bijan Natako*. Gulabdas Broker has psychologically unfolded the mysterious working of the human mind. Jayanti Dalal, in his characteristically satirical vein, deals with the contemporary socio-political hollowness; and Chunilal Madia with his powerful command over language, leads his readers sometimes to a realm of romance and sometimes to a world of stark realism. Humour and pathos are finding their full expression in all their aspects in the one-act play of Gujarat.

Autobiography and Biography

The form that is being remarkably developed in the post-Independence Gujarati literature is the autobiography. Almost all seniors in literature—Munshi, Ramanlal Desai, Dhumketu, Dhansukhlal Mehta—have written their autobiographies. Chandravadan Mehta and Champshi Uddeshi, too, have told us at some length about themselves. All these autobiographies are very interesting indeed, some by the richness of their material, some by their method of presentation. But the three most outstanding autobiographies are those of Nanabhai Bhatt, Indulal Yajnik and Prabhudas Gandhi. Nanabhai's *Chantar ane Ghadtar* is a masterpiece of moving simplicity, frankness and uprightness. Indulal Yajnik's autobiography, though not a model of literary style, gives a graphic picture of Gujarat during the years 1892 to 1921. Indulal himself being vitally connected with all the major activities of the period, is one of the most appropriate

authorities to write such a book. Some of his personal reminiscences, particularly the one relating to his wife are admirable specimens of masterly self-analysis, which can stand comparison with those of Gandhiji in his *Experiments with Truth.* But the greatest of the three is Prabhudas Gandhi's *Jivan-nun Parodh.* It not only gives us in detail the various stages of the growth and development of the author, but it also transports us to those days of the Phoenix Ashram, when Gandhiji was making experiments with Truth and Non-violence which utlimately made him the Phenomenon that he became. This book, moreover, possesses the equally important merit of being a first-class depiction of the growth of a child's mind and of the perversities creeping therein. The author is unusually modest in his estimate of himself. But his powerful and picturesque descriptions of nature and his sound understanding of the human mind are so masterly that they would do credit to any talented author.

Biographical literature, too, is well on its way to development in Gujarat. Quite a number of books have been written on the life of Gandhiji, but particular mention must be made of *Sardar Vallabhabhai* by Narhari Parikh, *Thakkar Bapa* by Kantilal Shah and *Ravishankar Maharaj* by Babalbhai Mehta.

Diaries, too, form a part of the contemporary literature. The Diary of Narasimhrao Divatia brings to light some aspects of a life that was, in one sense, uneventful and, in another, a heroic stand against the continued onslaughts of relentless fortune. Manuben Gandhi has also published her diary containing a day-to-day record of Gandhiji's activities in the Agha Khan Palace and Noakhali. But the best among the diary literature in Gujarati is *Mahadevbhai-ni Diary*[1], in five parts. It is a magnificent book and at once brings to life three personalities: the phenomenal one of Gandhiji, the loyal, unsophisticated and witty one of Sardar Patel and the soft-spoken, self-effacing, highly cultured one that was the author himself.

ESSAY AND JOURNALISM

Personal essay is, perhaps, the weakest part of creative literature in Gujarat. After Kaka Kalelkar and some others,

[1]Awarded the Sahitya Akademi Prize in 1955 as the most outstanding publication of literary merit in Gujarati since Independence.—*Ed.*

this form has remained almost neglected. The present generation has so far not been able to produce a single writer of personal essay of any real calibre.

This, of course, cannot be said in regard to humorous essays. True, there are not many humorists in Gujarat. But those of them that are have sufficiently high talent. Of the old guard, the name of Jyotindra Dave and of the comparatively recent arrivals, those of Bakul Tripathi and Navanit Sevak need particular mention. Jyotindra is, of late, becoming repetitive and discursive; still, he is decidedly the best humorist Gujarat has produced so far. He is amiable, versatile and generally free from angularities. He has an uncanny eye for wit, humour and satire. He can play on any key of humour, from the lowest to the highest. Bakul Tripathi's humour has a freshness and richness arising out of observing a thing or a situation from wrong angles. Navanit's *Saptatantra-ni Vato* is an admirable satire, in a half-serious vein, on the contemporary state of affairs.

Journalism in Gujarat, too, has been indirectly rendering valuable service to literature. Almost all responsible dailies and weeklies have had for a long time regular pages for literary discussions and book reviews. This feature has helped to create in their readers enthusiasm for literature. Monthlies and quarterlies too have rendered good service, within the limits of their policy. Of the present-day magazines, *Sanskriti*, by far the best cultural and literary monthly, *Kumar*, not a mere monthly but an educational institution in itself, devoted to the moulding of the mind and character of a whole generation of readers for the last 30 years, and *Akhand Anand* deservedly maintaining, since its inception ten years ago, a circulation which is unprecedented in the history of Gujarati monthlies, are three of the periodicals that must needs be mentioned. Similarly, mention must be made of *Janmabhoomi*, a daily to whose sane and sober policy, Gujarat owes some of its present-day political consciousness and wisdom.

A special feature of the leading Gujarati periodicals is satirical poems. The Quit India Movement in 1942 was responsible for the origin and growth of this form. The innumerable restrictions on the Press and the Platform had made criticism of Governmental policy almost impossible. It was only through humour and satire, therefore, that the ridiculous aspect of that policy

could be sufficiently exposed. Karsandas Manek was the first to realize this in Gujarat and the first to use the mediaeval vehicle of *ākhyān* for this purpose. Written in a mock-heroic vein, and replete with brilliant wit and satire, his *Vaishampayan-ni-Vani* brought out with great success and in a true journalistic fashion, the hypocrisy, incongruity and pettiness of the British Government and its henchmen of those days. Manek found a host of followers in this art. And even today, Gujarati dailies like the *Janmabhoomi*, *Gujarat Samachar*, *Sandesh* and *Lokasatta* regularly publish such satirical pieces in their columns.

Parsi Writers

Apart from the Gujarati writers proper, Parsis too have contributed their mite in the field of literature. Some of their writers have written poetry and stories in standard Gujarati and have been acknowledged on their own merit as Gujarati writers. Others have, somehow or other, preferred to live in isolation, with no very serious consideration for the chastity or the idiom of the language. They cater to their particular audiences. However, their language is Gujarati and it is in Gujarati that they have been writing their stories, novels, dramas, poetry, essays and editorials which have brought them the love and admiration of their readers.

Women Writers

Women, too, have made interesting contribution to contemporary Gujarati literature. Vinodini Nilkanth, who has been referred to earlier, Labhuben Mehta, Kundanika Kapadia, Dhiruben Patel and Gita Parikh (*née* Kapadia) are the most outstanding examples.

Translations

Translations and adaptations form a considerable part of contemporary Gujarati literature. Shakespeare, Ibsen, Tolstoi, Victor Hugo, Maupassant, Tchekov, Gorky, Emerson, Plato, Shaw and others among the foreign writers, and Rabindranath Tagore, Bankimchandra, Saratchandra Chatterjee, Premchand, Khandekar, Sane Guruji, Atre, and others among the Indian writers, have been introduced to the Gujarati reader through translations of some of their works.

Many of the most important works of Tolstoi have been translated into Gujarati, most of them by Vishvanath Bhatt some years ago and the monumental *War and Peace* by Jayanti Dalal recently. Except Tolstoi, no great world author has, so far, been fully and ably translated into Gujarati. Immortals like Homer, Virgil, Dante, Milton, Goethe and the classical dramatists of Greece have yet to be translated.

It is mostly novels and short stories from other literatures that are being translated till now. This means that commercialism and not unadulterated literary interest is generally the motive force behind this activity.

Literature of Knowledge

Turning from the literature of Power to the literature of Knowledge in Gujarati, one does come across activities which are very valuable. The Gujarat Vidya Sabha of Ahmedabad, the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, the Chunilal Gandhi Research Institute of Surat and the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and the Forbes Gujarati Sabha of Bombay have brought out many authoritative texts of old manuscripts, which have provided useful material for the study of Gujarati linguistics and history. The *Arvachin Kavita* of Sundaram, published a few years ago, and the *Brihat Pingal*[2] by Ramnarayan Pathak are results of very hard work, sound understanding, mature judgement and independent approach, which would do credit to any language or literature.

Important work is being done in the fields of literary criticism by Vishnuprasad Trivedi, Dolarrai Mankad, J. E. Sanjana, Vishvanath Bhatt, Vijayrai Vaidhya and Anantrai Raval; of philosophical thought by Pandit Sukhlalji, besides the work of the late Kishorelal Masharuwalla; of historical research by Muni Jinavijay and Haraprasad Shastri in addition to the work of the late Durgashankar Shastri; of philology and linguistics by Bhogilal Sandesara, Bechardas Pandit, Harivallabh Bhayani and Prabodh Pandit; but till now it is done only through stray articles published in learned journals. There is not a single book written by a competent authority on principles of Literary Criticism, discussing the subject in all its aspects. Similarly,

[2]Awarded the Sahitya Akademi Prize in 1956 as the most outstanding publication of literary merit in Gujarati during 1953-55.—*Ed.*

there is not a single, all-comprehensive grammar, based not on Sanskrit or English grammar, but on the study of the usages in the language itself. After Narasimhrao Divatia's *Gujarati Language and Literature*, in two parts, which was published many years ago, and which in the light of numerous new researches in the field badly needs a thorough revision, there has not been a single book embodying the results of a thoroughly up-to-date and scientific study of the subject. A completely authentic and detailed history of Gujarati Literature, like that of Saintsbury or Legouis and Cazamian of English, is a necessity.

As a matter of fact, it is only in the post-Independence period that an atmosphere suitable for the growth and development of literature has been created. The State and the Central Governments have come forward to offer, as a token of recognition of literary merit, handsome prizes in cash. The establishment of regional universities, too, has helped to stimulate a systematic and scientific study of the language and literature. The ever-expanding contacts between various language groups—national as well as international—are also making their influence felt in the literary climate of Gujarat. The average Gujarati writer of today has ceased to think in terms of only Gujarat and Gujarati literature. He has new and wider horizons opening before him.

The modern Gujarati writer, perhaps like his counterpart in other countries of the world, is working under a serious handicap. To put it in the words of the poet, he is, as it were, 'wandering between two worlds, one dead, the other powerless to be born'. The atomic and the hydrogen bombs have tended to shatter to pieces his faith in 'Tomorrow' and, thus, in the ultimate values of life. The task before him, therefore, is an uphill one. He has, in the first place, to revitalize himself by strengthening his own faith in those ultimate values, and then to sing about them with such full-throated ease that it does not fail to awaken an echo in the hearts that are not quite dead.

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HINDI LITERATURE

SACHCHIDANANDA H. VATSYAYAN

Historical Perspective

If it is permissible to begin with a seeming paradox, one would like to say that Hindi has been traditionally a language of protest. From the earliest times the bulk of its writing has been made up of expressions of resistance, more or less organized, by groups more or less clearly definable, to something or other. This protest has not always been the voice of progress: frequently it has been the voice of resistance to change, of reaction, of narrow-minded prejudice seeking to protect a decayed tradition or an outworn privilege against a healthy desire to adopt new ways. But the protest has always been there: the writer has always been in some sense a campaigner, a teacher, a gospeller, a travelling salesman of a particular 'line' of approach —to religion, to faith, to philosophy, to God; to the invader, the tyrant, the profaner of temples, the practiser of austerities, the homesteader; to nature, to the arts of love, and even to literature itself.

Undoubtedly there have been historical reasons for this streak: Hindi has been the language of the region which has borne the brunt of history. Since Hindi inherited from the Prakrits or the Apabhramsa dialects the responsibility of giving expression to the emotions and aspirations of the people as against Sanskrit which represented the more comfortable living and amusements of the privileged classes, its responsibilities kept steadily growing. Starting with the rejection of sacerdotal ritualism and the intricacies of caste under the influence of Buddhist thought it soon had to rebel against the bewildering esoterism of Tantrism and against the complex influences which led, if not to a complete renunciation of the world, certainly to the denial or evasion of the responsibilities of the common householder. The ravages of invaders and the onslaught of Islam which, in spite of the cruelty and intolerance of its adherents, represented socially an equalizing and liberating force, led to a further change in the nature of the protest. Hindi became the vehicle of an organized reaction, the form of which was inevitably condi-

tioned by the nature of the struggle: the conflict between a religion which laid down a code of conduct but granted freedom of belief and a religion which permitted wide variations of conduct with rigid adherence to a creed. Mediaeval Hindi is thus the mouthpiece of a society seeking to close its ranks, tighten its discipline, and generally to turn inward upon itself. With the gradual spread of Islam and the consolidation of power under Muslim rule, Hindi continued to become increasingly the language of an oppressed people. This conception of itself was heightened by the British policy of 'Divide and Rule' and the sustained patronage given to Urdu, not on its merits as a language but rather as the language of a favoured community—which false notion of the status of Urdu was, if not created, at least fostered and encouraged by the British rulers. The revivalist movements of the nineteenth century, and the parallel development of communal consciousness further intensified this outlook, though it must be made clear that the communal influences can easily be over-emphasized. They were in fact far less important than the general growth of nationalism, of which Hindi naturally and easily became the most important (and numerically strongest) vehicle.[1] Indeed, even revivalism, though most concretely expressed in religious reformist movements, was an aspect of a new and more secular conception of culture. The Arya Samaj (founded, 1875) was certainly a revivalist religious movement with a strong puritanical bias, but the cohesive power of the gradually emerging concept of culture as the body of tradition, the collective experience and the creative activity of a whole people was far wider in scope and lasting in effect.

To the present writer, the peculiar situation of Hindi throughout most of its history has always seemed to have resulted in a second paradox. Though the Hindi *language*, by virtue of its position as the language of 'the middle region' (Madhya Desha), has from its beginning been the vehicle of the main stream of Hindu thought and therefore always individualistic in tradition and spirit, Hindi *literature* has not generally been individual in achievement. That is to say, its history has not been characterized

[1]This is not to underrate the contribution of Bengali. Hindi assimilated the influences of the renaissance in Bengal directly and through translations. But the regional limitations of Bengali and the numerical strength of Hindi were both vital factors.

by the appearance of isolated literary figures of gigantic stature, but rather by great movements of thought or shifts of sensibility. It has always been a literature of trends rather than of individual achievement, great exceptions notwithstanding. It is only since the nineteenth century, since the Western concept of the artist as a unique, free individual began to be widely known, that the stature of the individual artist began to be important. Indeed the change in the conception of the role of the artist has been so marked and far-reaching that it may justifiably be called the liberation of the artist. Marxian criticism of the thirties of the present century sought to redefine the position of the artist, at first rather confusedly but later with the declared intent of disciplining him by party mandate; the effort did not succeed, but of this more later. To repeat therefore: it is only since the nineteenth century that the view has found prevalence and acceptance that writing does and must reflect the intrinsic qualities and the unique character of the individual writer. It follows that style in Hindi is only a recently emerged value: also, perhaps, that mannerism is a contemporary phenomenon. The same probably holds good of other Indian languages; but of these it is not for the present writer to speak.

These considerations are of special relevance in any study of contemporary trends in Hindi. Without considering the traditional situation and outlook of a literature, and an estimation of the contemporary writer's view of his role and function in a given context, it would be impossible to identify and assay the influences at work today or to assess the achievements of individual writers in any particular field. The assessment of contemporary writing is always a dangerous occupation, and even more so for one who is himself 'in the lists'; but with writing becoming increasingly and inevitably more and more conscious an art everywhere, the task has to be continually faced. Lacking the distance which lends charm to the view, one can find solace in the proximity which gives poignance to the struggle.

The Language

In a contemporary context, Hindi literature means almost exclusively the literature written in the Khari Boli—the language of the Delhi-Meerut region. Yet, as a generally accepted literary medium maintaining a uniform standard and continuity, Khari

Boli is barely a century old, and as the channel of the main stream of poetry it was established only with the beginning of the present century. Till then the traditional language of poetry was the Braja Bhasha, the speech of the Agra-Mathura region, though poetry was also written in the Avadhi, Maithili and other dialects or regional languages loosely grouped under the name Hindi. There has always been controversy about the delimitation of the frontiers of Hindi; recent political developments and the rising aspirations of regional languages have aggravated the situation. Philological study has only introduced fresh complications by introducing evidence which militates against the historical and traditional status of Hindi. It may be useful to outline briefly the traditional view, as this is still universally accepted by Hindi's own historians and all the source material to which the student might turn would be based on this view.

Hindi is the name traditionally given to the standard speech of the region extending from the western frontiers of the Punjab to the eastern frontier of Bihar, and from the Indo-Nepal border to Madhya Pradesh. Unlike other linguistic regions, this region has no name, being traditionally referred to as Madhya Desha, the central region. Unlike other languages again, Hindi comprises a large number of dialects not directly derived from the same parent stock and often having less affinity with one another than with neighbouring dialects of other languages. Indeed, it might almost be said that till the emergence of the Khari Boli as the standard Hindi language, Hindi meant a tradition rather than a language: a cohesive centripetal force that continually directed creative or didactic literary effort towards a more or less standard linguistic form to provide the basis of inter-dialectal intercourse throughout the region. It is this centripetal tradition that links Hindi with the Apabhramsha language of the eighth century and justifies Hindi historians beginning their narrative from the songs and couplets of the Buddhist itinerants. Undoubtedly there were many different Apabhramsha dialects current in the eighth century, but there is good reason to believe that there was only one standard literary Apabhramsha prevalent throughout northern India; it is also true that the traditions of the Apabhramsha were more truly and comprehensively inherited and preserved in Hindi than in any other language of northern

India. The heritage of the great devotional movements of the mediaeval period (12th-16th century) is again best preserved in Hindi or its dialects. The didactic, mystic, expository or rhapsodic verse of the poet-saints of this period is preserved chiefly in the Braja Bhasha and in Avadhi, though each acquired diverse and strongly regional flavours according to the provenance of the poet. Suradas, Tulasidas, Kabir, and Dadu Dayal belonged to the Hindi region, but the peculiar contribution of eastern, north-western and southern devotional poets also found expression in Hindi and through that medium travelled back again to their regions.

It is not necessary to go further into this intricate and controversial matter: today at any rate Hindi is incontrovertibly the language of about 150,000,000 people and its region comprises roughly half the territory of India.

The Modern period: Beginnings

It is only the centripetal tradition of Hindi which can explain the fact that the powerful movement which led to the swift establishment of Khari Boli as the predominant literary language of the region originated in Banaras, which was and is even today dominated by the Bhojpuri dialect, and was effectively supported by writers from the Avadhi region. The Khari Boli region itself was tardy and only slightly less lukewarm than the Braja region which quite understandably clung most to its own dialect which was sought to be unseated from its established position.

Another factor that influenced the growth of Khari Boli Hindi in its own region was that the same provenance and indeed the same lineage and tradition was claimed by Urdu also. What gradually tilted the scales in favour of Hindi, in spite of state patronage of the sister language[2], was the broad-based secular approach to culture to which reference has been made above. Urdu, as a highly sophisticated urbanized language with court associations, suffered from the faults of its virtues: it did not have the buoyancy and elasticity which the country-wide ferment demanded. Hindi, in spite of its lack of polish and of well-defined linguistic standards, had both vitality and adaptability, however cumbrous and halting its first efforts undoubtedly were. Most

[2] 'Persianized Urdu' was made the official language in 1837, replacing Persian.

Hindi writers of the late nineteenth century considered it necessary to display their knowledge of Urdu-Persian as well as of Sanskrit; consciously or otherwise they sought to establish their *bona fides* as writers in spite of their deliberate choice of a less accomplished though more satisfying medium. It was only about the second decade of the present century, when the efforts of a line of writers from 'Bharatendu' Harischandra (1850-1883) to Mahaviraprasad Dvivedi (1868-1938) had established a standard literary language that this tendency disappeared. When Prem Chand (1880-1936), already an established Urdu novelist, quietly changed over to Hindi the decisive step had been taken. That controversy between the two languages flared up afresh and was more acrimonious than ever before was due entirely to political causes.

Bharatendu Harischandra's creative work today would not be judged of very great merit; and that of Mahaviraprasad Dvivedi would probably rank lower still. But the former's influence in the cultural resurgence was profound and his personal career as a kind of a versatile, over-generous, fearless romantic hero only enhanced its effect, while the latter's devotion, integrity and indefatigable zeal as editor (1903-1920) established him as the architect of modern Hindi prose. The literary output of Harischandra and his immediate circle was substantial in quantity, varied in content, universal in appeal and compelling in tone, if not always flawless in quality; round this nucleus a larger orbit rapidly developed and a linguistic protest became a popular socio-cultural movement. Acquaintance with English literature to some extent influenced the choice of forms of expression: along with poems, plays, farces, skits, polemical tracts, critical and humorous essays, there appeared the more whimsical personal essay and then the short story and the novel. From Harischandra's time to the end of the nineteenth century the influence of English had generally been imbibed through Bengali, Calcutta being the British capital and the centre of English studies[3]; with the turn of the century contact became direct and other European influences (through the medium of English, of course) became active also—notably of Russian fiction and to a

[3]The first English college was founded in Calcutta in 1830. The Calcutta School Book Society had been founded in 1817; the Agra counterpart came into being in 1833. The Bible was translated into Indian languages in 1832.

lesser degree of French fiction and poetry. The historical romance (Hindi or translated from Bengali) replaced the tales of chivalry, mystery, miraculous adventure and light amours which constituted the entertainment fare of the earlier part of the nineteenth century. This was followed soon after by the realistic novel and the modern short story. The Hindi writer was by now familiar with the work of the great Victorians; in poetry he knew the Romantic lyricists very well but was also familiar with the longer narrative poetry not only of the Romantics but of Pope and Dryden and Milton. He also knew the work of Hugo and Dumas, and to a lesser degree of Molière, Balzac, Flaubert, Maupassant and Zola. Tolstoi, Turgeniev, Tchekov were becoming familiar names.

But it is only with the end of the First World War that we really enter the modern age: as for contemporary trends a discussion might quite reasonably start from a generation later. Elsewhere critics have talked of an age of confusion and an age of anxiety: in Hindi the two were contemporaneous and almost synonymous. The inter-War period might even be given a third label but for fear of being misunderstood: the age of frustration. In fact, the three represent different and inevitable aspects of the search for personality which was, consciously or unconsciously, the main driving force of the literature of the period and the source of its bitternesses and absurdities, its exasperations and exaltations. In a tradition where the age had always been more important than the artist, literature had inevitably been concerned more with the creation of types than of individuals, and poetry tended to be the poetry of motifs and conceits rather than the expression of individual sensibility. As the Hindi writer discovered himself as an individual, he became aware that as a creator he was concerned with persons. The realization was as painful as the discovery had been awkward and embarrassing: the degree of maturity and poise in subsequent writing directly reflects the degree and speed of the adjustment which the individual writer was able to attain with the new situation.

Chhayavada and Pragativada

While writing in the traditional modes continued, seeking a limited adjustment with new thought without renunciation of old forms and techniques, two major literary movements charac-

terized the inter-War period : the first confined mainly to poetry, the other more general.

Amongst those who reacted sympathetically to the new sensibility while accepting the rigorous discipline of traditional forms, Maithilisharan Gupta (1886—) stands pre-eminent. It is not that the influence of one of the new movements is entirely absent, particularly in his stray lyrics, but over a span of fifty years and more his poetry provides a unique instance of loyalty to tradition without rejection of experiment. From the point of view of language, his writings provided the best practical examples of the standards laid down by Mahaviraprasad Dvivedi, and were mainly responsible for the general acceptance of these standards.

The new poetic movement was an aesthetic, subjective movement, a personal revolt against formalism and didacticism. Like the Bhakti movement of six centuries earlier, it was a cry of the heart against the strait-jacket of tradition. The poet had found that there was something which was his very own and that he wanted more than anything else to say it; he chafed against the inadequacy of the instruments handed down to him—the language, the verse forms, the metres, the techniques and the taboos—and by the very intensity of his need built new ones. 'Nirala' (Suryakanta Tripathi, 1896-) and Sumitranandan Pant (1900-) were the pioneers of this movement and are both poets of great stature : Jayashankara Prasad (1889-1937) and Mahadevi Varma (1907-) also rank as considerable poets though they cannot be considered pioneers in the same way. Nor are they original and creative in the same degree. The fine word-consciousness, the sensitive use of vowel values and the musical insight displayed by Pant and Nirala, and the freshness and spontaneity of their response to nature, set them apart not only from their predecessors and contemporaries of other schools but also from the poets invariably associated with them in any account of Chhayavada. The movement has been called the Romantic movement; the label perhaps fits better than any other and it is undoubtedly true that the poetry of the English romantics—or at any rate some of them—exercised considerable influence, particularly on Pant. But any such analogies are risky; that this one is such becomes obvious when it is recognized that Romanticism was almost as powerful an element in the other and opposite movement that emerged soon after to oust it, namely,

Pragativada or Progressivism. As Chhayavada was an Indian Romanticism, with wonder in a benign and beautiful Nature but without 'fatal' men and women, and with a strongly theistic undercurrent, so also Pragativada was an Indian Progressivism, a sort of inverted Romanticism with an emphasis on the ugliness and ruthless amorality of Nature and a much protested sympathy for those so far neglected by poetry—the socially oppressed and downtrodden. To put it tersely, Chhayavada was a cross between early Romanticism and Vedantic synthesis, Pragativada a cross between late Romanticism and Marxian dialectic.

It may be that as aesthetes the Chhayavada poets were less aware of the sufferings of the common mass of mankind groaning under tyranny and oppression and disabilities of all kinds; but it is equally true that the lurid descriptions of the violation of the human person indulged in by many 'Progressives' were no different from the sadistic mental orgies of the Decadents. Ever since the 'eighties the Hindi writer had seen mankind and its endeavour in a new light, a secular perspective of the struggle for emancipation on many levels including the socio-economic (the secular approach was itself an aspect of emancipation). But it was not this general progressive-liberal outlook (presented at its best by the novelist Prem Chand) that was the objective of Pragativada, though in its early days it sought the co-operation of all such elements. From its early confused beginnings as a movement to broaden the social sympathies of the writer and enhance the appeal and significance of literature, it became gradually a definitely doctrinaire communist movement, disowning and denouncing one by one all the writers of the liberal-democratic tradition who had explicitly or tacitly supported it. As it became more and more a communist 'closed shop' organization, its writing became politically more explicit, guided and canalized and any suggestion of Romanticism (as of any other 'ism') became taboo. But even before it had completely stultified itself through intolerance, its ablest exponents were not free of a disguised sadism. Yashpal (1904-) and Nagarjun (1911-), both writers of considerable talent and power and the former one of Hindi's most accomplished craftsmen in fiction, indulge in such writing not unoften: 'Anchal' (Rameshwar Shukla, 1915-) and Naresh Mehta (1924-) are other good though less important examples. If further illustration from outside Hindi be considered

permissible in view of the inter-language character of Progressivism, the writings of Krishen Chunder and Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, both again very slick and popular craftsmen, may be seen to abound in instances of sadistic glee.

In the misguided belief that progressive writing necessarily meant writing about the militant worker and peasant, Pragativada re-established the stock character cast in stock situations of conflict—a sorry plight from which Prem Chand had only just rescued the Hindi novel. As most of the writers were of middle class urban origin, quite frequently they were completely ignorant of the mental sets and modes of living and reacting of the people they felt obliged to depict. This resulted in a vast quantity of pseudo-realistic writing systematically boosted by partisan critics whose short-sightedness and fanaticism today appears amazing. Equally strange is the fact that these writers paid so little attention to the work of Prem Chand whom they designated the Gorki of Hindi literature and professed to reverence as leader, guide and mentor. As the first Hindi author of fictional works that could be called novels in the modern sense, Prem Chand chose his field wisely; most of his characters come from amongst people he knew well—the peasantry; a few from those he knew less well—the lower middle class. (Once in a while he depicted the decaying feudal aristocracy or the rising intellectual: these attempts were neither successful nor convincing.) He depicted the life of the peasantry with remarkable faithfulness and great sympathy; his novels always had a well-constructed plot and the turn of events was used deftly to develop the personality of his characters and to individuate them strongly. In his early reformist days he tended to sentimentalize rural society a little; with growing maturity he became more detached and critical and his writing gained considerably in power. The earlier utopian reconciliations were abandoned (the Ashram was a feature of the novel of the Gandhian period, a symbol of reconciliation through service and sacrifice) and patterns of social conflict clearly recognized and firmly depicted. The novel as an artistic form has made great strides since Prem Chand, but for their wide humanity and appeal his novels still have to be surpassed. The 'Progressives' ran away with the thesis that Prem Chand's development from reformist rationalism to realistic understanding of social conflict was a total acceptance

of the doctrine of class war, and completely ignored his real contribution to the growth of the Hindi novel—the characterization of authentic individuals.

On the positive side, however, Pragativada did lead to a certain widening of sympathy, its militance encouraging critical self-examination in more independent writers and pricking the bubble of self-complacency and smugness. The resulting intellectual incisiveness and precision, combined with the width, plasticity and depth which Chhayavada had given to the language, gave subsequent writing a new character and flavour. Pragativada also gave a fresh fillip to the study of folk-life and literature and of regional cultures, and gave prominence to some new writers whose origins might otherwise have considerably delayed recognition or limited its field.

These movements telescoped into a few years influences that elsewhere have taken decades to spend themselves. It is natural therefore that, although Chhayavada and Pragativada (as distinct from political communism) are both dead as literary movements, writing in either manner should continue; just as poetry in the traditional modes continued during the period of these movements and still does today. Maithilisharan Gupta's best work belongs to this period: while holding firmly on to traditional moral values and orthodox techniques he has shown a remarkable mental elasticity in keeping pace with and adapting humanist ideas. Makhanlal Chaturvedi (1888-)[4] and 'Navin' (Balakrishna Sharma, 1897-) are both romantic nationalists and prone to allusive mystical phraseology. 'Dinkar' (Ramdhari Sinha, 1908-), also a romantic nationalist, has made interesting use of mythological material in modern contexts and is not averse to exhortatory writing in the idiom of common speech. Some of his recent writings have the terseness and telling quality of an epigram or a *bon mot*. It is interesting to compare these poets amongst themselves, with the Chhayavada poets and with the moderns in regard to their approach to language. 'Navin' is theoretically a purist, rejecting for Hindi any words except those of Sanskrit origin, but in practice uses an apt word with an almost disconcerting disregard for its ancestry and even for the effect on the texture of his writing. The other two poets have no such

[4]His book *Hima-tarangini* was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Prize in 1955—*Ed.*

bias and frequently use whatever word comes to hand—'Dinkar' generally being more conscious of the effect on the textural quality of his writing. None, however, have the delicate sense of word-music found in the Chhayavada poets or the even finer sense of the value of sounds and the conscious use of sound-patterns characteristic of new poetry.

Balakrishna Rao (1911-), whose early poetry had close affinities with Chhayavada, has made interesting experiments in the sonnet form. His language is simple and his diction close to ordinary speech : his themes are often slight but his fine sense of form makes his poetry a delight to read.

'Suman' (Shivamangal Singh, 1916-) combines a breezy camaraderie, suggestive of romantic affinities, with a manifest loyalty to progressivist doctrine. The doctrinaire habit fits him badly and the oratory of his longer poems is forced; only his innate good humour saves them from becoming rant. In the lyrical mode, however, his poems have an ingenuity, warmth of feeling and an easy bonhomie that is arresting.

Also still active are a number of writers, especially poets who, though they do not belong definitely to either of the schools discussed above, have a generally romantic colour often with varied Vedantic or other hues. 'Bachchan' (Harivansh Rai, 1907-), popular poet of romantic abandon, complete with beautiful 'fatal' figures, forebodings of doom, pre-occupation with death and other romantic paraphernalia, has had a sustained popularity over two decades. His language is smooth and fluent, and keeps close to the idiom of common speech, though the attraction of rhyme can sometimes lead him to a pitfall. That the language of contemporary poetry is still influenced by him is difficult to assert, but there is no doubt that his writings were mainly responsible for destroying the false belief of the reader of the Chhayavada period that the language of poetry is inevitably different from that of common speech.

Narendra Sharma (1916-) a poet of fine sensibilities, has veered from one school to the other and back again farther : after early experiments in folk and romantic ballads, and other deviations from orthodox form, his writing now appears set in a generally Vedantic mould, with increasing classical and mythological allusions, while traditional prosodic disciplines seem to have been finally accepted. Bhagvaticharan Varma (1903-)

combines romantic imagery and idiom with a lot of common sense. The satirical humour so often found in his fiction is reflected in his poetry also. He confines himself to regular, rhymed, metrical patterns; indeed he refuses to recognize the possibility of poetry outside this pattern.

Girijakumara Mathur (1917-) is also basically a romantic lyricist—at any rate his best poetry is in that vein—but he is an experimentalist in the matter of form and technique. He has made a definite contribution to the development of the form and idiom of what has now come to be called Nayi Kavita (New Poetry). Since his return from a sojourn in the United States, however, he seems to have carried 'experiment' to extremes along very set grooves: his latest writing appears to indicate an exaggerated mannerism rather than a new realm of experience.

Siyaramasharan Gupta (1895-) was of all the inter-War poets perhaps the least affected by foreign influences; he was also the one whose education had not comprised English at any stage. His writings combine, with great delicacy of feeling and austerity of thought, a quiet equipoised homeliness, a smell of the enduring, fertile, patient Indian earth. Subhadrakumari Chouhan's (1904-1948) rousing nationalistic verse and her simple, touchingly intimate pictures of home life earn for her a unique niche amongst writers of the period. The stories of Homavati (1904-1951) provide equally intimate pictures of domestic life, often with a touch of irony. Her poetry however lacks the detachment from personal emotion which would have made it great.

Another writer who cannot easily be placed in the general movement of Hindi literature is Jainendra Kumar (1905-), whose novels and short stories constitute one of the most significant literary contributions of this period. Though his language is often vitiated by little mannerisms and in his later writings thought may sometimes degenerate to sophistry and even mere word-play, he has presented many strongly delineated and memorable individual characters, displaying great insight and skill in depicting human emotions and the interplay of motives. He gave creative expression to the Gandhian philosophy of passive resistance, boldly carrying it to the logical extreme of non-resistance to evil and acceptance of suffering. His short novel *Tyagapatra* is a *tour de force*; many of his stories also show

an original, incisive, earnest and refreshingly provocative intelligence, in addition to presenting near-perfect examples of fictional art. His essays, at their best, show many of these qualities, but can degenerate to quibbling and slick word-play verging on banality.

While the two poetic movements had been inspired by Western Romanticism and Marxism respectively, the general progress of scientific thought influenced prose writing and particularly fiction. The historical approach to the scriptures led to a new type of historical fiction. The writer no longer sought to present a legendary hero in a plausible sequence of events, but rather to reconstruct a period, to depict the life of the people of that period as a whole. Bhagavatsharan Upadhyaya (1910-) in a series of short stories offered a panorama of the evolution of society from Vedic to mediaeval times; Rahul Sankrityayana (1895-) attempted a reconstruction of the life of the earliest republics; Rangeya Raghava (1922-) of the city state of Mohenjodaro. Such reconstructions were sometimes however quite unhistorical in spite of the great knowledge and erudition of the author, because while he was punctilious about the patterns and outward forms of life—details of vestments, furniture, food, rituals, etc.—he imposed modern mental attitudes and social conflicts. The reason was not any deliberate attempt at the falsification of history but an ideological bias and an eagerness to illustrate a particular theory of social development. Rahul Sankrityayana's imposition of conscious class struggle and Yashpal's of woman's struggle for emancipation may be cited as examples. Hazariprasad Dwivedi's (1907-) *Banabhatta ki Atmakatha*[5] was the one example of complete period authenticity. In this remarkable reconstruction of mediaeval society through the device of a well-known writer's autobiography the author has been scrupulously correct not only about outward forms but also about the social *mores* and the sensibilities of the period. Unique for the scholarship and devotion displayed in recreating a society, by its success in achieving in Hindi a linguistic style and diction which has the very tang and flavour of the ornate, almost inimitable Sanskrit original and is yet readable, the novel became a

[5]This book has been sponsored by the Sahitya Akademi for translation into other Indian languages. Malayalam, Bengali and Assamese translations are already published.—*Ed.*

phenomenon. But even apart from these remarkable documentary qualities the novel is a fictional masterpiece and one of the outstanding creations of the inter-War period. The first and so far the only novel from the pen of a Sanskrit-Hindi scholar, teacher and critic, the book has not received the recognition that is its due. Vrindavanlal Varma's (1888-) novels of the period of feudal decay, which have won both popularity and literary awards, also deserve mention, though some of them suffer from technical defects and sometimes read more like historical narrative. Lack of form is often due to excessive emotional attachment to the story-material, as for instance in the novel *Jhansi ki Rani*. The short novel *Musahibjoo* is a specimen of his best work.

The influence of Freud and his successors could not but be felt in Hindi, and was particularly noticeable in fiction, though psycho-analytical thought influenced criticism also, both directly and through the example of contemporary European fiction. The effects need not be discussed in detail, not being unique to Hindi. The psycho-analytical novel did not have many adherents, Ilachandra Joshi (1802-) being the only considerable example. He built up a large gallery of characters in various degrees of disintegration, the atmosphere created being one of profound gloom and despair bordering on morbidity. The total effect of his novels was not, however, as great as it might have been because, though the chain of events in his novels was never unplausible, the actions and reactions of his characters had just that degree of exaggeration that deprived them of convincingness. There was also a kind of sameness in them, made more marked by the autobiographical method he prefers; the narrator was oftener than not a sort of perverse drifter whose compulsive falling in and out of situations gave the story its continuity. *Sanyasi*, an early novel, is perhaps his best; later ones are more repetitive and episodic.

A special feature of this period was the increasing amphibian propensity of its writers: most of them wrote fiction as well as poetry and frequently essayed into critical prose also. Thus Bhagvaticharan Varma is a novelist, Siyaramsharan Gupta has written eassys as well as long and short fiction, 'Bachchan' and Narendra Sharma and Subhadrakumari Chouhan short stories, Makhanlal Chaturvedi and 'Dinkar' essays. Their poetry, however, stuck to orthodox channels: it was cast in established

prosodic patterns, regular, rhymed and recitative. Siyaramsharan Gupta was the one notable exception, while Narendra Sharma, as already stated above, made a few rare sallies into free verse. From the point of view of technique, therefore, after 'Nirala' and Pant the modern spirit was yet to find expression. The new need was already apparent in the late 'thirties, and a few poets were making isolated attempts to meet it, but the break with tradition was really ushered in by an anthology of new poetry which appeared in 1943. This 'experimentalist' trend is discussed later in the present article.

HUMANISM: QUEST FOR PERSONALITY

During the same (inter-War) period, however, a slower and less conspicuous but none the less profound change had been developing. It was not purely subjective, like Chhayavada, nor merely objective-correlative, like Pragativada, but a basic reorientation towards man. It was a growing awareness of the unique total entity of man, of the integrity of the human individual. This was a stirring of the literary consciousness; a new dimension of sensibility. Indeed it may be said that the two literary movements referred to above were only waves on the surface of this heaving flow. Pragativada had been the reaction to the turgid emotionalism and phantasy of Chhayavada, just as the latter had been a reaction against the dry didacticism and puritanical moralizing of the age immediately preceding it; but all three were only the crest-and-trough surface of a deep current of change for which a name has been suggested earlier: the quest for personality.

This vast pattern of change cannot be justly understood in terms of a literary movement confined to one language alone, nor even in terms of India as a whole; nor again in terms of imported political ideologies alone. The basic factor is the *impact of the West*: the quest of personality was the quest of a satisfactory and satisfying attitude towards the West, and of an emotionally and spiritually significant image of the East, i.e. of its own collective self. At its lowest it was a search for a defensive formula, a *modus vivendi*; at its highest a spiritual ordeal, a re-evaluation of all values. From the total rejection of all values considered sacrosanct in the past, through consolation in the present state to an almost fanatical religious or cultural

revivalism, Indian sensibility ran the whole gamut, just as Indian socio-political thinking expressed the whole range from enthusiasm for the industrial progress to horror at the stark materialism of the West. Hindi, true to its responsibilities as the vehicle of the mind of the vast Madhya Desha, reflected all the influences at work.

It is neither necessary, nor would it be possible in the span of this article, to examine this vast canvas of conflict in detail. And it may not be too relevant to observe that out of it was born an Indian myth of 'the East' which the Westerner may find as fallacious or amusing as Indians find the Western image of 'the Orient'. So far as the history of literary trends is concerned, the significant fact to record is that, before the final scientific adjustment was achieved and the vastly enlarged field of integrated vision accepted, there emerged several 'Hero' cults in succession: the didactic, the romantic and the progressive period each developed its Hero or protagonist. The Chhayavada hero was intensely patriotic and an upholder of traditional 'spiritual' values; the Pragativada hero was the party agitator-organizer or 'comrade', or the militant worker or peasant. Patriotism tended inevitably towards metaphysics because the emphasis on Vedanta was synonymous with the rejection of the 'materialistic' West. It is this that explains the numerous 'Odes to the Himalayas' written during this period, as well as the poignant blend of patriotic feeling and mystic phraseology observed in poets like Makhanlal Chaturvedi and 'Navin'.

Exit of the Hero

In the present context this is of historical interest only: India today is much more a part of the world than half a century or even a decade ago, and the East-West cleavage is no longer so deep or significant. Modern scientific theories have been accepted and assimilated, and it would be difficult to assert that the younger Indian writer of today is aware of any basic difference of sensibility from the Western writer. In Hindi it is natural, therefore, that the period of the 'Hero' cults of Chhayavada and Pragativada should give place to one of scientific humanism. The contemporary temper is non-heroic if not anti-heroic: the writer is no more interested in constructing man; he is content to discover man as he is, recognizing his profound importance.

Contemporary Hindi writing is concerned with the ordinary man: it accepts his ordinariness and the ordinariness of his loves and aspirations, hungers and desires, griefs, anxieties, sorrows, joys and tribulations and sees no contradiction between ordinariness and uniqueness. Man *is* ordinary; each individual *is* at the same time unique: it is from this premise that the contemporary writer sets out in his search of hope for man. For this also is an element in contemporary writing, particularly in what is now called 'Nayi Kavita' or New Poetry: the despair or pessimism of the late romantics and the forced optimism of the Pragativada Golden Dawn In Which The Worker Will Come Into His Own have both been replaced by a sober faith in man which recognizes his limitations and littlenesses. The strong feeling against any kind of regimentation, mass control, State guidance and patronage stems from the sober realization that man being ordinary can be led astray from his pursuit of the basic values and snared into a surrender of his greatest treasure: the freedom to express his personality. The values, the dangers, the weakness: the poet faces them as the realities of the human condition. It is because of this peculiarity that many superficial observers charge the new poetry with *anastha*, a word rather difficult to translate but implying lack of faith, or reverence, or values—or all three. In fact, there is a new and deepened reverence for values, with a growing sense of their reality; a feeling of urgency in the task of reconstruction out of the shambles in which the writer found himself a few years ago. Never has the concern with values and the sources of value been greater than today; of course no transcendental sanctions are sought and no values outside of man stipulated—and human values are recognized as stemming from the common man, not a conceptual Hero-man.

PRAYOGAVADA: NEW POETRY

The new, modern, humanist movement of the search for personality was given the name of Prayogavada or Experimentalism: the name had no special aptness or significance and was applied in a rather derogatory sense, just as the name Chhayavada was in its early days. The first anthology of the new trend, *Tara Saptaka*, discussing in a preface the attitude of fundamental inquiry and experiment, had used the word 'prayoga':

it was from this flimsy peg that the name was hung. But if a profound ethical concern, the quest for new values and searching examination of the basic sanctions or sources of value may be called experiment, the new movement may deserve the name. Poets of this school generally prefer to call their writing New Poetry.

Of course as always in a new movement there has been no dearth of charlatans. The search for new forms that the new temper necessarily called for has provided an excuse to a number of aspirants to present formless, indisciplined, adolescent verse as New Poetry, quaintness, exoticism, any weird or macabre pose as originality, a slick phrase as the inspiration of genius. The literary magazine editors, who as a class have unfortunately never possessed great discernment or vision (rare notable exceptions notwithstanding), and, except in the early days of proprietor-editors, not even the courage of conviction, have failed to exercise any constructive influence. There is hardly any judicious selection: where there is not a total ban there is indiscriminate acceptance of whatever is offered for publication.

The chaotic decline of editorial standards and the intensity of prejudice displayed by literary magazines during this period was a unique phenomenon. The literary critic also was conspicuously ill-equipped for his task. While there was translation or imitation of classical Indian or European treatises and numerous texts became available in Hindi, few critics proved equal to their responsibility towards contemporary creative writing. In view of the Indian tradition, which laid emphasis on sympathetic interpretation, exposition and appreciation, leaving the question of evaluation to successive generations of readers, it seems even more surprising that the critic should have been so eager to be judge first and last, thus deepening instead of bridging the widening gulf between writer and reader. It was in spite of general apathy if not hostility and perhaps even to some extent in consequence of it, that the contemporary writer became a more conscious and conscientious artist and craftsman than before. The importance of the study of poetry as well as of inward discipline was increasingly recognized by him.

It would, however, be a grievous error to assume that all new writing was experimentalist in trend, or that all experimental writing came within the ambit of what has been called New

Poetry. For political ideology has resulted also in a deep cleavage in literary sensibility. Poets who might appear to belong together on account of their poetic sensibility have to be placed in different and even mutually hostile categories because of deep-seated political biases. Some writers of the Progressive School adopted or profited by many of the experiments of the Prayoga school, as was only natural. But to the development of the new sensibility also some poets contributed who would not generally be grouped with the experimentalists, and may even be grouped with other schools. Shamsher Bahadur Singh (1911-) and Bhavaniprasad Misra (1914-) might be cited as examples. The former's writing has the polish and sophistication of Urdu writing, and intensity as well as sensitiveness. A strong visual sense has also attracted him towards Japanese (*haiku*) poetry. But his rigorous word-economy and the telescoping of intense emotion itself stands in the way of his becoming 'a poet of the people'. His poetic talent is unquestionable, but he is essentially a 'poets' poet' rather than a 'people's poet'. Bhavaniprasad Misra is much closer to the people both in language and in mode of expression : not only his vocabulary and syntax but also his rhythm and sound-patterns approximate to ordinary speech. The road that 'Bachchan' had taken while keeping within the bounds of traditional prosody, Bhavaniprasad Misra has followed to new fields of freedom, thus contributing to the contemporary movement.

While New Poetry has been concerned most with problems of value, the new humanist temper has been reflected in creative prose in different ways. Of course the amphibian capacity referred to earlier has continued and very few new writers confine themselves to any one form. The poets, being urgently concerned with the question of values, have done a considerable amount of critical writing on the subject, and extended their inquiries into various aspects of the creative process itself. Dharmavir Bharati (1926-) as a versatile and powerful younger writer who has sought expression in several fields and has also written a verse-play: Sarveshvar Dayal Saksena, Raghuvira Sahai, 'Madaṅ Vatsyayan', Jagadish Gupta, V. N. Sahi, Hari Vyas, Kunwar Narayana, P. N. Tripathi and others may be mentioned as writers of promise.

Another movement contemporaneous with, and in a sense an aggressive form of, Experimentalism might be mentioned

here in spite of its regional scope. This was the formalist revolt of three poets from Bihar—Nalin Vilochan Sharma, 'Kesari' and Naresh Kumar which drew inspiration from Ezra Pound and E. E. Cummings. While the movement is both interesting and useful in a study of contemporary techniques, it cannot be said to have recorded any major achievement so far.

The search for authenticity has led to regional fiction: the same urge as well as an enlarged human sympathy has brought sensitive pictures of rural and folk life in prose as in verse. Of course in a consideration of the 'urge towards the villages' in poetry, the attraction of newness and of an eagerness to try fresh forms and rhythmical devices must be given its due place, as also the ideological pressure to write for the masses and in the idiom of the masses. Shambhunath Singh, Kedarnath Agrawal, Trilochan Shastri, Kedarnath Singh, etc. may also be mentioned here for their verse, though folk tunes have attracted many others; 'Renu' Phanishvaranath (1921-), Markandeya (1931-), Keshavaprasad Mishra, Manohar Shyam Joshi and Shivaprasad Singh are all younger prose writers who have extended the field of Hindi fiction by depicting the life of particular regions. 'Renu's *Maila Anchal* has a distinctive place in the new regional fiction, while 'Rudra' in his *Bahati Ganga* has attempted a total picture of the life of a city (Banaras) over several generations. Nagarjun, mentioned earlier, has also made a significant contribution in fiction presenting a regional *milieu*. Amritlal Nagar's novels restrict themselves not so much to a region as to a particular section or stratum of society, but this deliberate narrowing of the field of observation is the direct result of the quest for authenticity, and his keen eye for the humour of a situation often gives his delineation an added charm.

The verse-play and the phantasy are new trends: the radio has undoubtedly stimulated such writing but cannot be said to be the prime cause. Many radio plays have been written also but the quality of these is rarely above the general quality of broadcasting in India. Amongst plays not specially written for the radio may be found occasional good ones, though even here the absence of a living stage tradition in close contact with the playwright has been a severe handicap. Upendranath Ashk (1910-), Ramkumar Varma (1905-), Lakshminarayan Mishra (1903-), Jagadish Chandra Mathur and Bharat Bhushan

Agrawal (1919-) have made significant contributions in this field.

The period here briefly covered, also produced a number of writers of the more or less orthodox metrical lyric : this particular type of poem, not always short as the name *gita* (song) might imply, had its own admirers and sustained the popularity of a number of its successful adherents. But apart from the fact that such writing displayed little originality, it might reasonably be argued that the modern trend (not only in Hindi) is against the inclusion of the lyric-writer (which description, it is hoped, is more polite than the more accurate 'song-writer') in a survey of contemporary literature.

A survey of contemporary writing had better restrict itself to creative writing : criticism of contemporary criticism is doubly dangerous, involving as it does more than one set of prejudices or bias. Such indirect references as might have been necessary or relevant have been made above.

As has already been pointed out, any survey of contemporary writing is bound to be controversial : the present writer is aware that he has not escaped the inevitable. He cannot even claim freedom from bias : such a claim would in any case be no more than an unverifiable assertion, for only a long temporal perspective may give sufficient detachment. But so long as such controversial statements concern an approach to a literature as a whole or to particular trends, they provoke or stimulate thought and discussion amongst those familiar with the field, and arouse interest among those not so familiar, and can do no harm. The writer hopes that his survey will encourage the unfamiliar reader to explore the vast field of Hindi literature with confidence, providing just enough guidance on perspectives to make such an exploration intellectually exciting and emotionally satisfying.

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KANNADA LITERATURE

V. K. GOKAK

INTRODUCTION

THE newly formed Karnataka State includes parts that were formerly in the Bombay, Madras and Hyderabad States, and the States of Mysore and Coorg. The new State has an area of about 85,000 square miles and a population of about twenty-five million. Its people have a rich and ancient history and have made significant contributions to Indian culture, art and architecture under the Kadambas, Rashtrakutas, Chalukyas, Hoysalas and the Vijayanagar Emperors.

From the point of view of antiquity, Kannada literature is next only to that of Tamilnad in India. Kannada literature begins with the advent of Jainism in Karnataka and assumes significant form in the inscriptions of the sixth and seventh centuries. The works of several poets of this period have been lost. The first available work is *Kavirajamarga* (A.D. 825), a treatise on poetry. The first prose work is *Voddaradhana* (A.D. 925). The period from 925 to 1150 was the golden age of the *Champu* epic, with Pampa, Ponna and Ranna as its great practitioners. The period from 1150 to 1336 was the age of Virasaiva revolt in life and letters, resulting in the emergence of new forms like the *vachana* or short prose-lyric and of new metres like *ragale*, *tripadi* and *shatpadi*. The prose style itself came nearer the spoken language.

The period from 1336 to 1575 was the golden Vijayanagara period adorned by the writings of the *dasas* or Vaishnava poet-saints, of epic poets like Kumara Vyasa, Lakshmisha and Ratnakaravarni and Virashaiva mystics like Nijaguna Shivayogi. From 1575 to 1700 is mostly a period of the continuation of the older literary motives, with a satirist like Sarvajna showing the altered social setting after the destruction of Vijayanagara. The eighteenth century reveals an attempt at the revival of the *Champu* epic under Chikadevaraya of Mysore and a cultivation of prose for purposes like those of history. These motives are at work till about the second decade of the nineteenth century. The modern period may be said to begin about this time.

Modern Period

The new movement of thought and life which is shaping the many-sided achievements of India today started on its career more than a century ago. Its full impact and the integral transformation towards which it is driving ceaselessly and irresistibly, have yet to be realized in their entirety. Kannada literature felt the impact of these new forces as early as the fifties of the last century. It is perceptible in the writings of a few scholars and Christian Missionaries of those days. The Kannada language was also changing from its mediaeval to its modern form and structure about the same time. Kempu Narayana's *Mudra Manjusha* (1823) is a landmark in this transition from mediaeval to modern Kannada. A prose romance dealing in an original manner with the story of the Sanskrit play, *Mudrarakshasa,* it is written in a language which presents a queer blend of mediaeval and modern grammatical forms. Mummadi Krishna Raya who ruled Mysore State from 1799 to 1868 was a great patron of the arts and himself a distinguished man of letters. The Kannada writings standing in his name are mostly in prose. This itself was a sign of the coming age, of the prominence that prose was to assume henceforward in Kannada. It has been said that verse should begin where prose ends. But in Kannada literature for over fourteen hundred years, prose hardly began anywhere and verse was unending. At the head of this modern republic of Kannada letters, therefore, stands a Mysore monarch.

Western Influence

To speculate on the question whether modern Indian literature was indigenous or exotic in its origin will soon be one of the minor graces of academic learning. But it is profoundly true to say that, at the outset, the West kindled on the Indian horizon lights that seemed to be unprecedented. It was not merely a new planet that swam into the ken of Indian writers a hundred years ago, but a whole firmament. English literature had given them new eyes and ears. The novel, the short story, tragedy, biography, autobiography, the essay, diary, epistle, the lyric—these and other literary forms with their enchanting sub-divisions threw open before them an infinite variety of wealth. They read with avidity Shakespeare and Milton, Addison and Swift

Johnson, Goldsmith and Burke, Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats, Scott, Jane Austen and Macaulay, Dickens and Thackeray. Scott inspired Bankim and Apte in Bengali and Marathi and their novels inspired Venkatachar and Galganath in Kannada, in their turn.

Shakespeare presided over the birth of the Kannada blank verse play, tragedy and historical drama. Even the Kannada mythological play frequently derived its pattern from him. Goldsmith and Sheridan ushered in the Kannada comedy of manners. Ibsen was the promoter of the Kannada social play and Shaw of the discussion play. The Kannada song-play and opera also grew out of English literary tradition, though it has to be acknowledged that something akin to them existed as a living force in the folk traditions of Karnataka. Poe, Hawthorne and Conan Doyle godfathered the Kannada short story. Boswell and Macaulay, not to mention several others, became the models for Kannada biographers. Wordsworth's *The Prelude* and autobiographies like those of Mill, Tolstoy and Oscar Wilde were responsible for the self-description of writers like Trivikrama, Divakar and Madhura Chenna. The personal essays of Lamb, Hazlitt and others inspired collections like *Gossip* and *Flashes*. Literary criticism like that of Coleridge, Arnold and Bradley gave the direction to critical writings in Kannada. Palgrave's *Golden Treasury* revolutionised Kannada poetry. B. M. Srikanthia, a distinguished professor of English, was fascinated by these lyrics and rendered several of them into Kannada. The collection of these translations became the gauntlet of the new movement in poetry. It also proved to be a treasure-house of new metres for the Kannada poet, for the new Kannada metres were undoubtedly derived from English metrical practice, though they can also be claimed as a legitimate extension of our mediaeval prosodic patterns.

This impact of new literary forms and motives was an event of boundless significance for modern Kannada, as for other modern Indian literatures. It revolutionized Indian writing, even as atomic research has revolutionized all scientific thinking and doing. It turned Kannada literature into a house of many more mansions than ever existed before. Young literary men who went to England or to the United States for higher studies imbibed these influences at the very source and were responsible

for newer techniques, like Kailasam and Adya in drama and Gokak and P. Sadasivarao in poetry.

The cultural contact with England has been equally significant on the side of 'applied' and 'floating' literature. Indian scientific thought was arrested in its growth even before the advent of the Middle Ages. But the English system of education introduced in our universities, whatever its limitations, has given a great impetus to new scientific writing. One can find books now in Kannada on almost all the major physical and social sciences. Progress in this field can be accelerated when Kannada becomes the medium of the universities in Karnataka. It is only when there grow up Kannada scientists and economists who are prepared to expound their discoveries and creative perceptions in Kannada that a genuine 'applied' literature will enrich the language. But Kannada journalism has reached a high standard, thanks to its history of endurance and sacrifice. It started, of course, as an off-shoot of the English tradition, purveying its news and views through an anglicized Kannada which sounded strangely on our lips. It has now come into its own, even as Indian democracy has come into its own and can pronounce on or denounce, in a language native to the soil, all manner of men and affairs. A new literature is springing up for children and for illiterate adults, passing through the threefold process of translation, imitation and original creation, though not in a strictly chronological order.

Classical Revival

We are, however, faced with a paradox when we examine the effects of the western impact on Indian literatures. This act of worship at alien shrines also coincided with a revival of past glories. The new and insurgent nationalism which gripped an awakened middle class, came to India via the Suez Canal. We rediscovered the real greatness of the Vedas and the Upanishads, of Kalidasa, Shudraka and Panini, *a la* Schopenhauer, Max Müller, Rider and Keith, though we came dangerously near burning the Vedas and the Upanishads *à la* Godwin, Mill and Bertrand Russell. The spirit of this revival was so all-pervasive that one might be led to think, at times, that the revival itself was the essence of the new movement. Basavappa Shastri, who was one of the earliest recipients of the new influence and trans-

lated *Othello* into Kannada, was also the grand translator of Kalidasa's *Shakuntala*. Mulbagal translated the *Uttara Ramacharita* and Turmari gave a modern Kannada version of *Kadambari*. The translation of Sanskrit classics was a persistent tradition in Kannada literature and it was revived now in a radically different setting. Even the Puranas were translated into Kannada. It seems that while we burnt incense at the altar of great European writers, as demanded by the new impulsion within us, we were determined not to forget our own self-respect and the great heritage from which we had temporarily disinherited ourselves.

Foreign missionaries did invaluable service towards this rehabilitation of our past, though often with an eye on the propagation of Christianity. Historical study on modern lines began with the publication of *The Epigraphica Carnatica* by Rice. Kittel's *Kannada-English Dictionary* opened up, for literary aspirants, the vast resources that the Kannada language had accumulated for nearly fiteen hundred years. Critical and biographical study began with the *Kavicharite* volumes which gave a chronological survey of the lives and writings of Kannada writers. The *Kavya Kalanidhi* publications made available to the reading public the treasures of ancient Kannada poetry. Shri Halakatti brought to light an invaluable department of Kannada literature, the *Vachanas*. Ratnakaravarni was rescued from comparative oblivion and set in his own legitimate place along with others in the forefront of Kannada poetry. Sarvajna and the Dasas came into their own. Caxton's printing press had, no doubt, filled the pockets of his countrymen with gold, more than they could hold. But it had also knit the Kannada people together as, indeed, all the other people in India, and made them intensely aware of their common heritage.

This consciousness of a great literary heritage was one of the vital marks of renascent Kannada writing. Bendre remarks, while addressing the Kannada Muse :

In you Bhoga and Yoga thrive,
O honey of the Jaina hive !
The Veerasaiva mystics sighed
For you, their Spirit's chosen bride.
O nautch-girl of the singer-saints,
You voiced their raptures and their plaints.

Muddana's love and tenderness
Your rainbow words could match and bless.
O Goddess ! Peerless maiden bright !
With my inmost soul unite.
I have waited ever so long,
Song, Oh, Song !

The revival of folk-poetry, in which Bendre and Madhura Chenna played a pioneering role, was in itself an inspiration for balladic lyrics and songs. The old inscriptions and hero-stones yielded up our history. Folk-tales and proverbs were discovered to be the repositories of our culture when they were collected and published. A scientific study of Kannada dialects and place-names lent colour to our poetry and drama, besides starting linguistic science on its carrer in the Kannada land.

The modern Indian languages also owed much to one another in the unfoldment of both these phases of the Indian Renaissance —the westernization as well as the revival. The *yakshaganas* of Karnataka influenced the evolution of Marathi drama. The Marathi novel, on the other hand, accelerated the evolution of the Kannada novel through the historical romances of Apte. Great Indian leaders of thought like Raja Rammohun Roy, Maharshi Dayananda, Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Mrs. Annie Besant, Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Ramana Maharshi belonged, not to one province, but to the whole of India. They were significant symbols of the new movement which was many-sided, though one, and the country accepted them as such. Their lives and their utterances shaped the outlook of numerous cultured men and women in the country and the influence of each one of them, in its own way, is as powerful now as when it began. The English language was of invaluable use as an important medium of communication for each one of these influences, directly as with Sri Aurobindo and Pandit Nehru and secondarily as with Tagore and Gandhiji.

An Analysis

But the primary concern of the Renaissance was, after all, the psychological need of the artist, his creative urge. The artist does not wish to dig up the past for its own sake, much as the archaeologist might. Nor would he find a supreme satisfaction in displaying all the labels on his luggage like a vain, continental

traveller. He has his own intuitions of Reality and his own readings of the present and the future. If he turns to the past and draws on that rich heritage, he in a way does so in order to verify and strengthen his own perceptions. If he looks around and is interested in the literary movements of other lands, it is because he finds in them a kindred rhythm, an identical pulsation. If he ranges over a wide area, it is because, like Tagore's musk-deer, he is mad with the mist of his own perfume. He looks for a two-dimensional—vertical and horizontal—extension of his own life-attitude. The modern Indian languages borrowed from English literature in this miraculous way and started on their own unique adventure. They also renewed their strength by drinking deep at their own ancient springs of inspiration. For the men and women who spoke them during this period had their own life to live, their own aspirations to work for.

What was this new life ? It can now be defined with reference to the Kannada people. The first half of the nineteenth century was, for them, a period of casual but significant beginning of the new movement of thought and life. The structure of the language itself had changed imperceptibly and prose had gradually extended its sway over its own legitimate domain.

Kannada books had begun to be printed and there were Kannada newspapers like the *Karnataka Prakashika* of Mysore, 1865. A Kannada translation of the New Testament was published in 1823. The court patronage in Mysore helped to maintain, in South Karnataka, the continuity of Kannada literary traditions. The rest of Karnataka had been broken up into numerous administrations. Kannada had to struggle here even for mere existence. But it could, on this very account, imbibe many more influences and develop earlier democratic modes of thought and expression. There was a note of uncertainty, a touch of transition in the writings of this period. But the mediaeval literary tradition persisted and still dominated the literary scene.

First Phase

The second half of the nineteenth century is alive with the hum and stir of a new life. The process of westernization and of revival was the major pre-occupation of this period. There was a steady inflow of Sanskrit and English classics through translation. The drama, novel, biography and criticism gradually

came into their own. The novel was the best established of these forms. M. S. Puttanna was the first outstanding exponent of realism in Kannada fiction. The aesthetic crystallization of the new consciousness took place on a grand scale in Muddana's *Ramashwamedha*—a 'novel' epic presenting a traditional legend in a framework which is new because of the vision of life presented in it—the love of Muddana, the narrator, and Manorama, his wife, in whom we have a Kannada Benedick and a Kannada Beatrice. Several literary journals had been started and new literary forms quietly came into their own. The lyric was in a transitional stage in its style, metre and imagery. But it had definitely been changing under the new impact. Even a gifted rural singer like Sarif Saheb marvelled at the complex structure of a textile mill and paid homage to it, though only as a symbol for his metaphysical theme. The Christian Missionaries were equally active during this period with their translations of the Bible and of psalms and hymns.

The period from 1900 to 1920 led to more positive and varied achievement. Writers like B. Rama Rao, Alur, Mudavidu, Muliye Timmapaya, Panje Mangeshrao and S. G. Narasimhachar were active during the period. Modern Kannada poetry was definitely coming into its own in the compositions of some of these writers and in the poetic output of S. Katti, V. M. Tatti, Santa Kavi, Kavyananda and others. Some of the lyric translations of H. Narayana Rao and B. M. Srikanthia had already been published during this period. Kerur was a pioneer of genius and he wrote some brilliant plays, novels and short stories, besides doing exciting work as a journalist. The Renaissance was formally enthroned in the Kannada land with the founding of the *Sahitya Parishat* in 1914.

Golden Period

It was from 1920 onwards that modern Kannada literature entered on its golden period. Nests of singing birds suddenly became vocal all over Karnataka. The Taliru group under the leadership of B. M. Srikanthia, Masti and D. V. Gundappa, the Mitra Mandali of Mangalore under the guidance of Panje and Govind Pai, the Geleyara Gumpu of Dharwar headed by Bendre—these and other groups were active all over the province and produced poetry of a remarkable loveliness. Gifted younger

poets like K. V. Puttappa, V. Sitaramia, P. T. N., Rajaratnam, Kadengodlu, Madhura Chenna and Mugali emerged from these very groups. Betigeri and Sali also produced charming poetry. They wrote poetry redolent of the soil and of the stirring age of resurgent nationalism in which they lived. The ode, elegy, sonnet, song and hymn; the narrative poem, ballad, romance, the philosophic poem, dramatic lyric and monologue: these and several other departments of poetry were cultivated with an intense delight and genuine inspiration. Many of the genres of the novel were made to live in shining instances, the novel of manners in Betigeri's *Sudarshana*, the novel of character in A. N. Krishna Rao's *Sandhya Raga*, the satirical novel in Kasturi's *Chakra Drishti*, the psychological novel in Devadu's *Antaranga*, the period novel in Karanth's *Marali Mannige* (Back to the Soil), the problem novel in Mugali's *Karana Purusha*, and the 'stream of consciousness' novel in Adya's *Vishwamitra Srishti*. Karanth's *Bettada Jiva* is a fine instance of the novel of locality. The historical novels of Betigeri, Kerur, Masti and K. V. Iyer are greatly interesting. The detective novel is still mostly in the hands of amateurs. A. N. Krishna Rao's *Nata Sarvabhouma*, K. V. Puttapa's *Kanura Subbamma* and Gokak's *Samarasave Jivana* (Harmony is Life) are novels with a complex pattern.

The drama too has its recognized names during this period —T. P. Kailasam, Huyilgol, Garuda, Samsa and Adya. The various kinds of drama have also come triumphantly into their own—the legendary play (Garuda's *Paduka Pattabhisheka* and C. K. Venkata Ramia's *Mandodari*), the historical play (Samsa's *Suguna Gambhira* and Masti's *Talikote*), the social play (Huyilgol's *Shikshana Sambhrama*, Kailasam's *Home Rule* and Adya's *Harijanwara*) and the satirical play (Karanth's *Garbha Gudi* and Mugali's *Namadhari*). One turns for poignant tragedy to Samsa and to plays like Kailasam's *Who is in the Wrong*? and for romantic comedy to plays like Gokak's *Yugantara*. Kailasam, Adya and Bendre are also masters of the one-act play. The verse-play has a distinguished history, giving us the Greek type of tragedy in Shri's *Aswathaman* and K. V. R.'s *Antigone* (translated directly from Old Greek), the blank verse play as in the adaptations from Shakespeare by Puttapa and D. V. G. and Masti's *Yeshodhara*, the song-play as in *Tirupani* and P. T. N.'s *Ahalya* and the tragic and comic opera as in Karanth's *Somiya*

Bhagya and *Somebody Said It.* Blank verse is akin to one of the *ragale* metres in Kannada and this facilitated the introduction of blank verse which is a potent medium for dramatic writing.

The short story is one of the most popular modern forms. Masti was the father of the Kannada short story and he gave some brilliant examples—philosophic stories like *The Last Days of Sariputra*, patriotic stories like *Vasumati*, historical stories like *The Rani of Nijagal*, stories of folk-life like *Mosarina Mangamma* and lyrical short stories like *Is It Indira or No* ? Betigeri, Ananda, Gorur, Gopala Krishna Rao, Krishna Kumar, Srimati Gouramma and numerous others have enlarged and extended the range of the short story in the direction of incident and character, sentiment and thought, atmosphere and psychology.

The essay is another striking department of modern Kannada literature. Its history began much earlier with the treatise and the article. But the personal essay came into its own in collections like *Gossip* and *Flashes* and achieved range and variety in collections like A. N. Murthy Rao's *Day-Dreams*, Narayan Bhat's *Upanyasagalu*, N. K. Kulkarni's *Mungalu Putige* and Adya's *Swarasya.* The character essays of S. Krishna Sharma and Bendre, the critical essays of T. N. S. and A. N. Krishna Rao, the descriptive essays of Puttappa, the narrative essays of P. T. N. in *Bhavanachitragalu* and the epistolary and geographico-cultural essays of Gokak indicate roughly the range and variety achieved in this field. We have classical biography as in D. V. G.'s *Gokhale* and romantic biography as in Puttappa's *Vivekananda.* The Kannada autobiography is spiritual as in Madhura Chenna's *Prelude,* literary as in Rajaratnam's *Ten Years* and aesthetic as in Gokak's *The Shape of Beauty* or mainly political as in Diwakar's *Seremane.* The diary as a literary form is illustrated by Gokak's *From Beyond the Seas* and A. Rao's *The Price of Release.* There are delightful travel books by V. Sitaramia, Gosavi, Manvi and others. Literary criticism has, during this period, been mainly an attempt at defining the creed of the new movement, interpreting the vast treasures of ancient Kannada literature, expounding the ideals animating European literature and synthesizing the old and the new. A special mention has to be made in this connection of T. N. S.'s *History of Sanskrit Aesthetics*, Mugali's *History of Kannada Literature,* Krishnamurthy's translation and edition of *Dhwanyaloka* and Karki's *Chandovikasa.*

Many of the writers mentioned in the preceding paragraphs have also contributed to literary criticism. Several critics like Malawad and Ranganna have also enriched work in this field. Scholars like Basavanal and Kundanagar have, besides, published critical editions of ancient Kannada classics. The memorial volumes published in honour of some eminent men of letters also contain valuable contributions to Kannada literary criticism. Indeed, it can be said that many of them have done distinctive work in more than one literary form.

1939 and After

The next phase may be said to begin about 1939, the year in which the Second World War broke out. The 'progressive' movement of the thirties gathered strength about this time and left a strong impress on the literature of this period. It also became a pivotal point for the rise of the younger literary generation. *Rasarishi* was a collection of lyrics which testified to this new awareness. The writers of the earlier period continued to be active and even to give the lead in some of these new directions. Dramatic developments took place on the Indian scene —the Quit India Movement of 1942, the advent of Independence in 1947, communal riots, the liquidation of Indian States, the assassination of Gandhiji, the Goa liberation movement and the reorganization of States in India. The younger literary generation grew in the lights and shadows of this atmosphere. The writers of the older generation focused on these situations a developed art and a mature vision. But the younger ones responded to them with a fresh intensity.

There was an access of new strength to poetry. K. Narasimhaswamy, Adiga, Sridhara, Kanavi, Ekkundi, Kinnigoli, R. Sharma and others infused a new sensibility into the lyric. The long poem achieved a much greater variety. Puttappa completed his *Ramayana*, the epic in blank verse, which won the Sahitya Akademi Prize. D. V. G. Published his *Kagga*, the *Prelude* of his faith. Masti produced *Navaratri*, his *Canterbury Tales*. Bendre's *Sakhi Geeta* has all the abandon of a romantic epic. Govind Pai's long poems on the Christ and the Buddha are 'episodes' in the manner of Arnold's *Sohrab and Rustum*. Vinayaka's *In Life's Temple*, a lyric-sequence, is, in effect, a sculptured representation of the Indian Renaissance. Adiga's *Valley* and

Gondalapura were new creations in the manner of T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land.* Vinayaka's *Sea-Songs* introduced free verse and a new subject matter into poetry. The romantic manner of composition, either in its folk or its regular aspect, had been well established in poetry. A new diction and imagery, a new metre and structure were a compelling need for fresh poetical effort. The modernist technique seemed to hold out this promise. Vinayaka, Adiga, R. Sharma, Shivarudrappa, Kanavi and others have ventured into these new paths. The modernist way is only one of the ways of writing poetry and there are many ways within the modernist way itself. All these are being explored.

There is no space here to assess the varied achievement in different forms of literature since 1939. But mention could be made of some new names in fiction—Mirji, Kattimani, Inamdar, Kulkund Sivarao, T.R.S., K. T. Puranik and Hegade. Some of these have written short stories as well, along with writers like Huyilgol and Ananta Murthy and Varagiri. Parvata Vani, L. J. Bendre, N. K. Kulkarni are some of the new names in drama. Nadig, Gadagkar and Vadappi have cultivated the personal essay. K. Krishna Murthy, K. Narasimha Murthy and others have contributed to literary criticism.

Several novels and short stories have been written against the background of the Second World War. It was also an important theme in poetry. So long as man remains human, says Govind Pai, the battlefield is the mother of Peace. This holocaust, says Inchal, happened on the very soil on which the Christ, the Buddha and Basava preached their gospel of peace. Vinayaka in *Asura* narrates the imagined interview of a poet with Hitler and interprets the Asuric urge. Chittal writes with poignant pity about the slaughter in Hiroshima and Kasturi holds up atomic weapons to ridicule in mock-heroic verse. Shri Rao gives a lucid narrative of the War in verse.

The Quit India Movement figures effectively in novels like those of Inamdar and Kattimani. V. Sitaramia describes the great uprising in a powerful ode:

These people !
Who can hinder now their onward march ?
Who can set the limit to their illimitable hopes ?
Towering temples will rise
And lift their spires to the blue of the sky.

The people will mock at the burning lustre of constellations
And measure the immeasurable winds.

Rai celebrates in a long poem the I.N.A. of Netaji Bose. The Bengal famine of 1943 which inspired in Kannada interesting stories and novels like Mugali's *Anna*, draws from Govind Pai the lyrical exclamation: 'Blessed with plenty, we die of hunger. Endowed with life, we live like breathing corpses.'

The advent of Independence thrilled all hearts. Almost each poet suddenly burst out singing. Fiction and drama vied with poetry in celebrating or commenting on the event, as in Adya's play, *Shoka Chakra*. The poets from South Kanara published a collection of lyrics, *Udghosha*, celebrating the event. But disillusionment shadowed this sense of elation. Vinayaka sadly visualized Mother India as a two-faced goddess like Janus:

O the agony of two forms,
Of two lives and two loves!
It is a tangled path, the path of one becoming two!

Writing on the birthday anniversary of Gandhiji, Bendre remarked: 'Let us speak the truth on this day at least. The rest of the year we dedicate wholly to falsehood.' 'The light-festooned lamp-posts declare the advent of freedom', says Chittal, 'but how shall I ever forget these giant funnels emitting black smoke, consuming human lives as fuel?'

The assassination of Gandhiji roused the conscience of the people and infused into them a new sense of values. The Kannada poets paid their homage to the Father of the Nation in a moving collection of lyrics. Hemant has a moving elegy on Vallabhbhai Patel, the architect of national unity. The poets turned gradually to the gospel of constructive and harmonious work as the only way out of the impasse. 'There is still here, O friend,' says Adiga, 'the garden in which hope burgeons forth. Beneath the strewn thorns and stones lies a rich soil, the play of springs and fountains.' Vinayaka imagines Mother India saying:

For this the saints descended in the flesh
Believe this, my children!
Exterminate misery from the land
And enthrone equality and equanimity of vision.
Then will the sapling of freedom you have planted today
Yield freedom its meaning and blossom forth into light.

Fundamental of the New Movement

I have mostly drawn on poetry to illustrate the mood of the new period. Considerable work has been done in other forms of literature also. But I should like to devote the rest of this chapter to an elucidation of the fundamentals of this new movement of life and thought called the Renaissance, in its entirety.

The men who produced and are producing this literature belong to diverse professions and creeds. They have been Hindus, Christians like Uttangi, and Muslims like Akbar Ali. They are Jains, Lingayats, Brahmins, Okkaligas, Reddis. They have been variously educated. If Sarif Saheb had hardly a smattering of the Kannada alphabet, some like Kailasam had all the fastidious education that the best English universities could give. They have been primary teachers like B. K. Lakshmeshwar, secondary teachers like Basavanal, lawyers like Honnapurmath, clerks like Desai Dattamurthy, drill masters like Muddana and village landlords like Govind Pai. They have been missionaries, priests and swamis of *maths* or monasteries. They have also been journalists, shopkeepers like Venkata Setty and Vali, education inspectors like Panje Mangesh Rao, university teachers (a prominent class of writers today), civilians like Masti and medical practitioners like Sivaram. They have been political agitators like S. Sharma and agitators who hold responsible posts today like R. R. Diwakar, who was Governor of Bihar. The Kannada republic of letters, like Chaucer's Canterbury pilgrims, is composed of the most heterogeneous types and professions. The wind bloweth where it listeth and touches with immortal fire the lips of the vagrant singer as well as the sedentary scholar. Some have made 'letters' their profession like Karanth and A. N. Krishna Rao.

One of the most important principles of this new writing was self-revelation, the insistence on the sacredness of human individuality. The fact that literature fulfils itself by expressing personality came as a revelation to the writer. The new writer was intoxicated with this discovery. Lyrics and essays and even novels and plays glorified this cult of the individual. It is only recently that poets have turned consciously to the other aspect of the matter, to an escape from personality, to an expression of the *vishwa manava*, the universal man in the artist, rather than of the pageant of his heart.

These writers also looked on Nature with new eyes. The world-famous Jog Falls had not, surprisingly enough, figured in Kannada literature till the advent of the modern era. But modern Kannada is full of its sounds and reverberations. The Romantic approach to Nature has been fully realized in modern Kannada poetry. Every lovely landscape is becoming part of the Kannada world of imagery. The art and architecture of Karnataka have themselves been the themes of many lyrics and essays. There are Puttappa's rapturous songs of Sahyadri, Bendre's imagery of dawn and peace, Sitaramia's songs of the open road and the fountain lake, Vinayaka's presentation of the grandeur and horror of the sea and P. T. N.'s description of the Pleiades as an eternal question that wanders through cosmic space. The grind of the factory and the turbo-electric engine have also been heard in Kannada poetry. Needless to say, these themes have their counterparts in the other literary forms also.

Nationalism has been another dominant theme. Bendre's *Song of Thirtythree Crores* is a grand choric symphony. His *Vision in a Dream* pictures the dreamer who recognizes his Mother, the soul of the nation, and wakes with a shock of terror when she confronts him with the demand : 'Prove it, if you are a man, by sacrificing yourself on my altar.' His *The Young Ascetic* shows that inner liberty is the prerequisite of the outer. The traditional attitude towards love was more erotic, aesthetic, or moral than spiritual. But it now figures as the recognition and exploration of another human soul by an individual in many novels, plays and poems. There is the poetry of men and women, picturing the inexhaustible variety of human character. Even more moving is the poetry of social justice. Bendre's *The Bag of a Morsel of Food* is an impassioned lyric voicing the agony of the dumb millions of India. His *Blind Gold was a-dancing* is a terrific impeachment of capitalism :

> It set the bells pealing ding-dong in the temple.
> It set the violin and the lute to soft tunes in the palace.
> And it left bags of money a-jingle in the market-place.
> Dancing madly, dancing waywardly,
> Blind Gold fell prostrate on the ground
> When the fun was at its highest.

Rajaratnam's *The Songs of Ratna* makes an effective use of the

Kannada colloquial idiom and exposes the iniquity and injustice in society. In *Tirupani*, a song-play, Masti deals with the canonization of a Harijan saint and the theme of untouchability is handled in several powerful plays like *Jalagara* and *Udhara* and novels like *Chomana Dudi*. The international situation stirs the Kannada poet to indictment and to prophecy as in Puttappa's *The Kokil and Soviet Russia* and Bendre's *Rudra Veena*:

> Earth is volcanic again.
> The mountains split amain.
> And the dykes dam streams in vain
> As they slake the red soil.
> The seat of justice upturns
> And the thrones of kings are urns
> And caste and creed returns
> Behind the mind's turmoil.

The metaphysical imagination figures prominently in lyrics, short stories and even in novels and plays. Poems like Shri's *Shukra Gita*, Madhura Chenna's *My Lover* and Bendre's *The Sword of Life*, one-act plays like Masti's *Usha*, novels like Gokak's *Harmony is Life* and operas like Karanth's *Mukta Dwara* testify to this tendency. A predilection of this kind is indeed a prominent feature of the Renaissance.

The humanization of legendary themes and characters is another significant feature. It often results in the championing of epic antagonists like Ravana in Puttappa's *Ramayana* and C. K. V.'s *Mandodari* and Uttara Kumara in Adya's *Niruttara Kumara*. Meditations on the nature of art and inspiration have also been a fruitful theme in modern Kannada poetry, fiction, drama and other forms. Masti's *Subbanna*, A. N. Krishna Rao's *Sandhya Raga*, Gokak's *Kalopasaka* and *Vimarshaka Vaidya*, Kailasam's *Shurpanakha*, Adya's *Purva Ranga* and *Sampushta Ramayana* and P. T. N.'s *Rasasaraswati* are only a few instances in this line.

Eight Tributaries

There are eight tributaries that contribute to the living confluence that is modern Kannada literature. These are the trends perceptible in all the modern Indian literatures and they probably serve to illustrate the opulent and integral nature of the Indian Renaissance. Some of these were active with the advent

of the new age. Others have gathered strength in the course of its full career. They may even seem to be apparently in conflict with each other. But life absorbs and transcends paradoxes and reconciles contraries. To see them in their confluence is to be aware of the complexity of the new movement and also its all-embracing unity.

There is, first, the group of satirists or realists, the inverted poets judging and condemning human imperfections in the light of a hidden ideal. Writers like Kailasam, Karanth, Kasturi, Beechi, Adya, Adiga, Kattimani and V. G. Bhat laugh at our colossal ignorance and superstition. They expose the hypocrisy of our daily lives, the hollowness of our pretensions and the vulnerability of our social, political and religious institutions. They refuse to sail utopian paper-boats. But they also reveal, each in his own way, the core of tenderness, goodness, or sweet reasonableness that may lie imbedded, whether in a traditional or in an unconventional personality. They are, to that extent, humanists as well. Writers belonging to other schools also frequently share this predilection of the realists. But that is not the main bent or preference of their personality. Some of these realists may lament, denounce, or prophesy doom in the manner of D. H. Lawrence or the early T. S. Eliot. Their groans or spasms of despair may have caught the rhythm, the accent and the punctuation of English modernists. But Indian writers do not have to learn to be miserable, cynical or indignant from outsiders, when there is so much misery in India. The Kannada novels and plays throw a lurid light on the disparities in our social life. The problem of marriage calls forth the following verdict on the heroine, by the dramatist, in Bendre's play. *The Murrain of Mockery*: 'If it is true that the married alone are saved, it matters little if her soul does not ascend to heaven. She will be happy if her soul will be held captive in hell for ever. There will be no peace for her or for her parents *if she is born again.*' Adya sees in marriage the difficulties of an Ashwamedha: 'Here, on this earth, is Kamal, the daughter of Venkappa. The occasion of this overture is the mess of her marriage. May the youth who will be her perpetual host stop her on her way and marry her at once!' The mother-in-law, the widow, the educated girl, the joint family system, prostitution, the panderess—all these are the themes of many plays and novels. The problems

of present-day education are presented in plays like Kailasam's *Hollow and Solid*, Adya's *The Circus of Saraswati* and N. K.'s *Bar Room*. Bendre indicts feudalism in *The Drama of Death* and Kailasam arraigns an unenlightened democracy in *Home Rule*, in the rules framed for municipal councillors: 'If and when elected, no two councillors should reside in the same street locally. This is to guarantee to the tax-payer at least as many clean-kept streets in our city as there are councillors in our Corporation.'

Then there is the group of progressive writers who are mainly concerned with problems of social reorganization. Dinkar Desai, S. Dodmani, Archik, Venkanna and Kulkund Sivarao have a strong social awareness both in its national as well as international context. Some of them are strongly doctrinaire and steeped in Marxist thought. But Marxism itself has suffered some sea-changes, two of them being Stalinism and, now, Anti-Stalinism. Many writers are conscious of the ideal of a Welfare State and even impatient for it. There are numerous pictures of poor life which put forward a passionate plea for socialism—Bendre's *Epidemic of Beggars*, Rajaratnam's *Justice in Hell* and Ramakant's *Kalki*. Many of our realists and satirists have found a positive creed in socialism.

Thirdly, there are the traditionalists who believe in the values of their established faiths and are prepared to devote their time and energy to an exposition of their creed and to an investigation and rehabilitation of the literature belonging to it. The swamis of *maths* are especially active in this field. There are also some writers who have done valuable work in this line by way of textual criticism, exposition and editing of manuscripts, like F. G. Halakatti and R. S. Panchmukhi. A few others have worked for a faith to which they were not born, as Rajaratnam has done for Buddhism. But the writing in this line has been more critical than creative. Traditional faith can hardly be an inspiring force in a revolutionary age like ours. It may, on the other hand, harden into fanaticism and intellectual narrowness if it is not properly counterbalanced by contact with other thought. But Karnataka has been peculiarly fortunate in the diversity of the faiths it has nursed through the centuries. Jainism, Virasaivism, Vaishnavism, Shrivaishnavism and Advaitism have ancient roots in Kannada literature. Islam and Christianity have

also been well grafted. Work done in expounding these faiths would be invaluable and even helpful to the formulation of a new synthesis, provided it does not lead to rivalry and controversy.

It is the evils of established religion and of traditionalism that have brought a fourth class of writers into being—the agnostic humanists. Adya's *Niruttara Kumara,* V.G. Bhat's poems, R. Sharma's *Hridaya Gita* illustrate this trend. Even D. V. G., a sceptic with mystic leanings, has given us a magnificent and poetic testament of scepticism in his *Kagga.* V. Sitaramia illustrates the special type of humanistic temperament which has been a unique feature of the West. It borders on mysticism, but holds back, being too intellectual to surrender personality. It is interested in an exploration of the subconscious and the subliminal after the manner of Freud and Jung and in scientific formulations like those of Einstein. Whatever the genesis, the writings of humanists like Sitaramia, S. V. Ranganna, A. N. Murthy Rao and Kashyap are marked by a rare sense of tenderness and pity, unflinching honesty and delicate sensitiveness. Sitaramia describes lovingly the Kannada land. He speaks with gentle humour of the fleeting and peremptory visitations of his Muse. He pays a warm tribute to the student who died while saving Hindus as well as Muslims from blind communal frenzy. He knows that experiments with light in a physics laboratory, which illumine the darkness of the ignorant, can also be darkness to the learned.

There is also the fifth class of writers distinguished by their possession of a poetic-religious temperament—Masti, P. T. Narasimhachar, Govind Pai, Devadu, Sali, Karki, Inchal and Ekkundi. Traditions and temples and myths and legends fascinate them. But they speak with an authenticity and subtlety of experience which goes straight to our hearts. Some of them are not very vocal about their beliefs. But others are and the human soul is, for them, not merely a luminous point of consciousness, but the immortal spark of Spirit lodged in clay. It is from this standpoint that they survey life, nature and man.

Next come the writers to whom their aesthetic adventure is their supreme felicity. For writers like Puttappa and Ananda, life is an adventure of the soul in a world of beauty. For Puttappa, even God is Beauty. Happy in his equation of Art and Life, Puttappa lives his life of rich sensations. The very archings of

the eyelids of *Kalasundari*, the Muse, have an irresistible power over him. His is not a simplified aestheticism, for there is room in it for the influence of Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda and also Sri Aurobindo as evinced in the allegorical structure of his *Ramayana*.

It is also necessary to mention the ethical, reflective or philosophic school of writing which is animated by a singular loftiness of purpose. Honnapurmath, Taranath, Divakar and Budihalmath belong here. Their writings are directed towards a moral and intellectual regeneration of society.

There is, then, the Gnostic School of writers. The influence of Sri Aurobindo, which colours Puttappa's writing, feeds the central flame in this group. Sri Aurobindo's philosophy presents a well-reasoned reconciliation of Spirit and Matter, Society and the Individual, Reason and Intuition. It harmonizes, in a comprehensive scale of values, opposites like rationalism and mysticism, aestheticism and socialism, action and contemplation. This is what attracted Bendre, Madhura Chenna, Gokak, Mugali and others to Sri Aurobindo. The twin points in their consciousness, those of individual and social evolution, could not be fulfilled in any other way. The individual responses have, of course, varied in each case. Madhura Chenna evolved mainly on the individual side. He thought of tracking song to its origin in the deep recesses of his own being :

> Flashing lightning-like afar,
> I wonder, fleet one, who you are ?
> Shimmering here and glimmering there,
> Who are you, so bright and fair ?

Bendre was more conscious of the dual evolution from the very beginning. The poet who gave the romantic imagery of:

> I have a longing all the while
> To lie down on the gossamer pile
> Of pillowy clouds and quite disdain
> The very remembrance of pain !

and wrote overhead poetry charged with the lights and colours of the inner consciousness, could also write:

> And the inmost voice of the poor
> Who are half-starved, ill-fed,
> Is surging, threatening and thundering
> As they are clamouring for bread :

'We'll bury God under the ground
And visit His tomb on our nightly round!
Set fire to creeds of men that rave,
To burn as incense on His grave.
We'll swing the soul into death-knells
And follow them with shrieks and yells.
Stung into madness by death-dearth,
We'll make a morsel of this earth.'

I venture to think that these eight groups of writers can find their compeers in each Indian region, for the Indian Renaissance is pouring itself into these moulds, with whatever degree of variation. It is a rich and many-sided awakening destined to enable India to fulfil her cultural mission in the world. The beliefs of each writer are conditioned by his own environment, circumstance and temperament. All beliefs are equally valid in literature if they are valid for the writer himself and do not invalidate his writing. A writer is to be judged, not by the philosophy he professes, but by the intensity of the flame that burns in his consciousness. Philosophy is only a peg to hang a hat on and it is the hat or the many-coloured coat that matters, not the peg or the hanger.

But a closer scrutiny is sure to reveal the fact that the contribution of all these schools meets and mingles and is unified in a rich and new life, a new and complex individual and social awareness. Realism cleanses the foundations of society and uproots the mass of ignorance, corruption and superstition. It promotes in the individual an unflinching honesty and integrity. Progressivism, in its right manifestation, upholds the ideal of a regenerated society, a society so reorganized as to allow the free and unhampered growth of the individual to the height of his own fullest stature. If traditionalism is assiduously engaged in unfolding the fundamentals of the faiths that our people have inherited and in bringing out the essential points of unity in each, a healthy scepticism will prevent the fostering of any dogma and encourage the desire for an unfettered and open-eyed experience and tuning of the human consciousness. Ethicism will plead for a well-regulated ideal of social and individual discipline, humanism will infuse into our people a rare sensitiveness of the brain and heart, and aestheticism will implant in them a love of beauty in all its nuclear and cosmic manifesta-

tions. Gnosticism will endow them with a rich sensibility of other and higher planes of existence, set no limits to the heights to which an individual can grow, replacing the desire-self by the psyche and merging the psyche into spirit and reveal to man the secret of the power that builds a new heaven on earth. This, and nothing less, is the aim and endeavour of the Indian Renaissance. The literature that is its transparent expression is active on all these fronts and acting from all these multiple centres. But there is a unity in this multiplicity and that is the unity of the new and complex symphony that Indian life is going to attain.

It cannot be claimed that modern Kannada literature has sounded all the depths of this complexity or that it has carried sensation into the heart of all knowledge. It is towards a new synthesis that our literature is evolving today, as everywhere else in India, however hesitant its beginnings and however frequent its shifts of emphasis from one extreme to the other in individual aesthetic adventures.

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KASHMIRI LITERATURE

P. N. PUSHP

Introduction

Kashmiri literature of today is a rather precocious child of the past fifty years or so of Kashmir's socio-cultural developments. It is precocious in this that qualitatively it has attempted to acquire in less than three decades what other prominent literatures of India have taken about a century to achieve. It is no doubt heir to a long tradition of literary excellence accumulated through more than six centuries in Sanskrit and Persian; but it has never been a court-language. In spite of the liberal patronage extended to it as a medium of secular literature, by the enlightened Zainul-abi-Din (fifteenth century) it never grew powerful enough to eject Persian as the language at the court of the Sultans or their successors. Unlike other modern Indian languages like Bengali, Gujarati and Marathi which also emerged out of the Apabhramsas current in various regions, Kashmiri never got a fair deal. It was doomed by circumstances to be shunned by the elite except for purposes of sophisticated musical composition mostly aping the Persian models.

The snobbish unconcern of the later rulers could, no doubt, have been turned to a positive advantage by the conscious artist, had a reasonably long recess of peace and stability not been denied to it by the activities of political adventurers. Anyway, in spite of its earlier pre-occupation with the spiritual and the mystical, Kashmiri was bound to become the inevitable expression of the unsophisticated masses. That, indeed, is the only justification for *Sitikantha* (thirteenth century) to turn to the 'Sarvagochara desabhasha' (of Kashmir) as the most befitting medium even of Tantric hymns of popular appeal, and this, notwithstanding the introductory link-ups in Sanskrit!

As such, Kashmiri managed to survive the literary monopolies of Sanskrit, Persian and Urdu during the various periods of its chequered career. This survival was possible because of its imaginative assimilation of what it could take with advantage from these languages. Naturally, therefore, today there is no

such thing as *Hindu* Kashmiri and *Muslim* Kashmiri, as 'observed' by Grierson. What a Kashmiri finds, on the other hand, is just *Kashmiri*—with, of course, a few dialectal aberrations brought about not by anything in strict obedience to religious denominations, but by natural predilections of people in different walks of life. The dialectal variations between the forms of Kashmiri as spoken by the urban and the rural sections of population, or for the matter of that between those spoken by the residents of Maraz (north of Srinagar) and Kamraz (south of Srinagar) is more marked than the negligibly small variation between the so-called *Hindu* Kashmiri and *Muslim* Kashmiri.

Anyway, it is a pity that till recently Kashmiri was not made even a subject for study in the primary schools. That explains why journalism in Kashmiri is undeveloped and prose has yet to make a mark. This is due not to a dearth of creative talent, but rather to an appalling lack of facilities for publication and to a no less appalling apathy of the reading public for whom knowledge of Kashmiri holds no promise of lucrative jobs or careers.

And yet can there be any doubt that only in Kashmiri, in the native idiom, can the spirit of the land find full expression and the life of its people be adequately portrayed ? The question is very affirmatively answered by the numbered short stories and prose pieces that have recently appeared by fits and starts, despite the handicaps. The *Sat-Sangar* (Seven Cliffs) of Akhtar Mohiud-Din registers a creditable climb after the exploratory attempts by Somnath Zutshi, Umesh Kaul, Roshan, Nadim and Harvon; and more recently Kamil and Ali Mohammad Lone among others (like Taj Begum) have confirmed the hopes raised by their forerunners in the field. Equally bright is the promise held out by the plays of Pushkar Bhan, Ali Mohammad Lone, Kamil, Zutshi and Roshan after the pioneering efforts of Jagannath Wali (in his *Zoon*, on Haba Khatoon) and Mohiud-Din Hajini (in his *Grist Sund Gara*). It is positively a far cry from *Satach Kahwat* (The Touchstone of Truth—a mythological play on Harischandra written by Nand Lal Kaul Mandaloo more than thirty years ago when attempts were made to establish a Kashmiri theatre) to the social plays published under the title *Kuni Kath* (The Only Tale) only three years ago. But unfortunately, the first Kashmiri novel has yet to run through the press. All writings attempted in this *genre* so far are still in the manuscript. Three of

them at least (one each by Akhtar, Kamil and Lone) which are struggling hard for appearance in print, are sure to make a sound beginning.

These writings have certainly not recorded any advance in technique and composition, but their content does indeed flavour of the soil and unmistakably points to the new life that is dawning in Kashmir. The mobile political worker, the awakened peasant, the dwindling middle-man, the painstaking artisan, the brisk boatman, the sweating labourer, the crazy clerk, the gay idler, and the docile yet pathetic women folk—all are found breathing the freshness of a new dawn and probing the new problems of a changing world. Much of this writing is, no doubt, puffed up with hopes of a brighter morrow, but quite an appreciable proportion is pre-occupied with grim realities of the hour. And that is a happy trend which is most pronounced in Kashmiri verse of today.

Past Heritage

Unlike Kashmiri prose which is still crawling, as it were, Kashmiri verse can justly claim a considerable stature and a significant quality. The literary tradition in Kashmiri verse dates back to the 13th century when Sitikantha chose 'the language of the people intelligible to all' for his *Mahanaya-Prakasa,* a Saiva (Tantra) treatise. Obviously the people's language was adopted at first as a convenient medium for the dissemination of popular religious lore, but soon it came to perform other literary functions too. The Kashmir of those days was tormented by a political crisis and new socio-cultural patterns were being forged by the inevitable contact of Saiva philosophy with Sufism as preached by the Muslim mystics. The new note of this synthesis rings clear in the utterances of Lal Ded (14th century) and in the didactic verse of her junior contemporary, Sheikh Noor-ud-Din (Nund Rishi). Lal Ded's utterances embody some lovely pieces of mystic lyricism saturated with the idea of the Supreme—'immanent in and yet transcending everything'—weaving thereby the subjective and the objective into an exquisite pattern. The verses of Nund Rishi express a forceful plea for a balance between the material and the spiritual. Both these saints anticipated Kabir by stressing the need of an internal discipline and by leading a crusade against spiritual apathy and formalism. In their verse Hinduism and

Islam speak a common idiom and make a fervent appeal for human brotherhood, social equality and spiritual oneness, cutting across all dogma, caste and creed.

Later on the Persian 'Masnavi' provided a convenient technique for this literary development and Mahmood Gami gave the mystical tradition a new turn. The Kashmiri versions of the Persian masterpieces like *Yusaf-Zulaikha*, *Laila-Majnoon* and *Gulrez* are vibrant with originality as allegorical romances; while *Heemal* presents a brilliant example of artistic collaboration : its narrative is the work of Wali-ullah Mattoo while its lyrics are the overflow of Zarif's genius; and yet the fusion is astonishingly perfect.

The longer (narrative) poems which were the craze of the past two centuries had also been attempted centuries earlier. The court poets of the enlightened Sultan Zain-ul-Abedin (fifteenth century) not only rendered the *Shahnama* of Firdausi into Kashmiri verse but also contributed to the Kashmiri language an epic (*Banasurā-vadhā*), a biographical poem (*Zainacharita*) and a play (*Zaina-vilasa*). But the chaos that followed the death of the patron seems to have eaten up all these and many other works of the time. The tradition reappeared in the nineteenth century and was utilized by Mahmood Gami for the purposes of the Mystical Romances. Paramananda gave it a new significance by drawing upon the folk traditions about Krishna and Siva. His *Rādha-svayamvara*, *Sudama-charitā* and *Siva-lāgna* are compact of great poetry combining the Vaishnavite fervour with Saiva abandon. In spite of their Puranic themes these are delightfully convincing in their social appeal. The Ramayana poetry had much earlier reached its bloom in the popular *Ramavatara-charita* of Prakash Ram Kurigami (eighteenth century); and the historical narrative of Wahab Pare (nineteenth century) had also struck a new path.

The lyrical trend which was already at work in the utterances of Lal Ded blossomed forth into the passionate plaints and hankerings of Haba Khatun and Arnimal. In fact it was Haba Khatun (the talented sweetheart of Yusuf Shah Chak) who revived the literary tradition in the sixteenth century and inaugurated a new period of creative literary activity. A peasant girl risen to queenly glory, she made the Kashmiri lyric aware of the mundane thrills of life. Her songs overflowing with the sad melody of smiles and tears dominated the whole period until in the eighteenth century Arnimal, the forsaken wife of a Brahmin

Persian poet, gave to the Kashmiri language some of the loveliest lyrics, throbbing with the spontaneous outpour of emotion at once personal and inter-personal. The trend later on side-tracked into devotional verse and gave us the Leela and the Naa't. Krishna Razdan and Nazim employed the folk strains and wove them into a rich pattern. But the mystical lyricism also flowed on uninterruptedly down to the present day and reached culmination in the spiritual humanism of Masterji (Zinda Kaul).*

It was, however, towards the close of the last century that contemporary life came to feature directly in Kashmiri verse. The satire of Maqbool Kralawari and Wahab Pare thus paved the way for what we now call realistic verse. A good many poets of the period tried a number of literary genres such as satire, lampoon, caricature, parody, tragicomedy, ode, *roh* (folk-dance song) and last but not the least, the ghazal, to which Rasool Mir gave an unprecedented sensuousness and a haunting cadence, and it was the ghazals of Mir that enthused Mahjoor (1885-1952), the harbinger of modern Kashmiri poetry.

Contemporary Period

Kashmiri poetry of the last two decades and a half has admirably reflected the socio-political awakening of the Kashmiris and their epic struggle for freedom from the feudal yoke. It voices the growing consciousness of the people dreaming of a New Kashmir. Mahjoor was indeed the first to arouse the people to an awareness of such a change dawning over them. His patriotic and nationalistic strains gave Kashmiri poetry not only a new tone but a new outlook. He re-orientated the conventional symbols of the *gul* and the *bulbul* (the rose and the nightingale), of the *bombur* and *yambarzal* (the bee and the narcissus) and evolved a new symbolism worthy of the new urges. This symbolism served him as a 'safety-valve' against the official censor; for how else could he have escaped incarceration for having awakened the people to a new socio-political consciousness against feudal autocracy? His junior contemporary Abdul Ahad Azad was more outspoken. His spirited verse with a super-national accent is a mighty crusade against religious fanaticism, communal prejudice and national parochialism—in fact, against all sorts of fads (except, of course,

*Whose book of verse, *Sumran*, has been awarded the Sahitya Akademi Prize in 1956.—*Ed.*

his own). His was also a forceful plea for the establishment of a classless society where no invidious discrimination could thrive.

Those days Kashmir was suffering the scourge of dehumanizing diarchy—the feudal monarchy and the imperialistic Resident-state. People had to offer very grim resistance, and Arif, later on, sang the 'heroics' of this struggle in his 'Magar Karvan Son....' (But our caravan of freedom pushed persistently ahead !) The whole atmosphere of Kashmiri literature was thus surcharged with a revolutionary fervour so much so that while Asi the coolie-poet portrayed the woes of the toiling masses groaning under the dead weight of a feudal order, Masterji the mystic sang in profoundly simple and substantially modern tones not merely of eternal longing and interrogation but also of being ferried across the river of time into a (classless) society of ideal human beings, where domestic, communal, national and international life is harmoniously integrated.

Such was the literary scene in Kashmir on the eve of the Tribal Raid which galvanized the freedom struggle into a People's Resistance. The autumn of 1947 proved not only a turning point in the political life of Kashmir but also revitalized all that was noble in the country's literary and cultural tradition.

Nadim was one of the foremost organizers of the new cultural movement and appeared to be the most promising Kashmiri poet of full-blooded youth and dynamic optimism. Soon he found himself in a congenial company of youngsters like Roshan, Rahi, Premi, and many others. Even poets like Arif, Ariz, Ambardar and Fazil who had made a much earlier start took favourably to the new trend and a number of novices also sang of the new urges and aspirations against the background of the prevailing crisis and the future destiny of the land of their birth. Mahjoor, of course, was there to bless them all.

A wave of national indignation against the Raid gave rise to a resurgence of patriotic poetry which rallied all forces of popular resistance against anti-social and anti-democratic elements. Nadim's 'My Youth is Fresh' is typical of this trend signifying the new determination of a people fighting for emancipation from the bonds of slavery, political as well as economic. Internal peace and harmony were the most urgent need of the hour. The poet responded to this need with gusto and strengthened the cause by stressing all that was valuable in the country's cultural

heritage. He sang to his countrymen of the significance of the agrarian reforms and other drastic measures like the liquidation of usury and rural debts. Emphasis was naturally laid on the new role the worker was destined to play in the shape of things to come; and the poet called upon the peasant who

> With his ploughshare
> every year
> writes a new destiny
> upon the Mother Earth's brow....

to—

> reclaim the wounded earth;
> remove the frowning furrows from her brow,
> the wrinkles from her face
> and the cataract from her eye.

The 'wind' reported to the poet:

> I have witnessed the eyes of the rose
> red with indignation;
> Revolution has infused new vigour
> into the rills;
> The turf I found vying with
> flowers in zest—
> I sensed a new determination
> in the ever-running cascade;
> I saw the cypress take a rock-firm stand,
> And blades of grass
> were rising to their feet.

His heart leapt up when he found Nature rejoicing:

> The cascade sporting down the mounts
> with jingling skirt
> bedecked with pearl,
> got up early at dawn,
> while the moon was waning away
> and came to enjoy its madding youth
> upon the oval mass of stone.

But the poet was pained to see that

> Robbing the worker of his share
> the money-maker has filled his coffers
> and is now proudly moving from market to market
> showing the human flesh for sale.

This pre-occupation with the proletarian theme is quite symptomatic of the new economic developments in the State; and a very popular trend of the past few years has been a preference for folk-forms such as harvest-choruses, cradle-songs, lullabies, and labour-chants. Roshan has written a number of lovely poems and phantasies on the picturesque seasons of Kashmir, wherein we find the common man pursuing his multifarious activities and taking firm strides towards peace and plenty. Premi too has covered many an aspect of the workers' life; and particularly delightful are his songs portraying the farmer weeding out the fields, planting the seedlings, reaping the crops, or picking the saffron-filaments. In his 'Harud' (Harvest) he has showered upon a dance-song the rhythmic brilliance of a transformed peasantry.

The period of transition is bound to be irksome and boring; and people easily grow impatient with the speed of development. No wonder, therefore, that it should have encouraged the trend of disillusionment too. Almost all the poets who acclaimed the 'new order' have on occasion heaved a sigh of frustration. The hardships that the common man was undergoing were aggravated by social evils and bureaucratic bunglings; and the poet therefore raised his voice against all such malpractices as black-marketing and corruption. A few ghazals of the late Mahjoor and quite a large number of the quatrains of Arif are replete with bitter irony and candid criticism of the persisting vestiges of the 'old order'. Mahjoor, for instance, caricatured the newly-won 'Freedom' thus :

> This Freedom is a heavenly nymph;
> Should she then move from door to door ?
> Nay, she dallies forth in a house or two....
> ....
> ....
> People are aggrieved; the bureaucrats are bridegroom-like,
> Enjoying honey-moon indoors with Dame Freedom !

The most damaging condemnation of the renegades appears in a poem by Roshan, wherein a martyr's aggrieved mother exposes the hypocrites, who every year flock to her son's grave and pompously shower flowers there. She complains to the undying spirit of her son that they have betrayed the cause of freedom, leaving the fight half way and comfortably resting their backs against the pillows of an archaic order. In another forceful

poem 'Bram' (Illusion) the poet voices the determination of Kashmiris to undo the mischief of those that would like to tear their country off from India.

The uneasy feeling of suspense and insecurity nurtured by the indecision of the Security Council regarding the future of Kashmir also provided substantial food for Kashmiri poetry; and the poet, fully aware of the implications, watched the developments with a keen and impatient interest. His denunciation of war-mongers, therefore, is a natural corollary to his genuine desire for world peace without which his efforts to build the new Kashmir of his dreams are sure to be thwarted. Kashmiri language can justly be proud of its soul-stirring advocacy of peace, not as an abstract ideal, but as a concrete reality—a pressing need of the hour for the common man throughout the world. This is how the Kashmiri poet felt about it:

I will not sing today....
any amorous, soft and soothing song
of the flower or the nightingale....
of the cascade or the tulip bed,
nor a verdant song of the dew....
For today, for today....
the venomous breath of autumn
is chasing the vernal breeze away;
and man is seen preparing fast
to prey on man again....
Therefore will I set out today,
set out today—
I'll pave the way,
I'll level the bars and barriers away;
I'll face the foe, the highwayman,
and cry—'hands off' to him;
Equipped with hammer, sickle and pen
and a firm resolve
I'll move about....
from post to post!

Some of these peace-poems are in the form of a people's impassioned challenge to the war-mongers, but the most effective are those that emphasize the constructive endeavours of the common folk in their different walks of life and thereby bring out the urgency of the peace-campaign. The poems of Nadim, Roshan,

Rahi and Kamil on this theme open out a vast panorama of life, both domestic and national, against a rich background of nature.

In fact, much of the recent Kashmiri poetry is dominated by the idea of what the common man is capable of achieving, if a safe and favourable future is guaranteed him. The poet therefore sings of the bright sun appearing on the horizon with a new message, dispelling the gloom of ages and ushering in the dawn of a new humanity. Asks Rahi :

How will the darkness, lightning and the storm endure
When the sun shall rise and shoot forth morning rays ?
The palour of autumn shall tremble away
When the lovely vernal symphony will echo forth....

Rahi has almost stolen a march on his senior contemporaries today in artistic appeal and has successfully experimented with the Kashmiri ghazal to which Mahjoor, Azad and, even, Masterji had already given a new socio-political flavour. Kamil also has written a number of ghazals in the style of Iqbal and has in a way intellectualized emotion. His *Mas Malar* (Waves of Wine) is a very promising collection of above-the-average pieces of poetic craft.

Ghazal is not the only form which has been re-orientated. The contemporary Kashmiri poetry has very much widened the scope of Kashmiri metrics by drawing upon all the old measures and adding new ones. Thus, for instance, besides the Vakhya, the Rubai, the Masnavi, the couplet and the Pada styles and folk-metres, the sonnet has also been attempted with fair success. The Opera and the (Radio) Verse Feature also have considerably helped to explore the possibilities of employing free verse and other new metrical patterns and devices. Free verse has wonderfully suited the Kashmiri language because of its rich assonances and the flexible vowel-system.

The opera and the poetic drama in Kashmiri are a recent growth, and Nadim has very cleverly recast an old folk-tale into the mould of a musical feature. Depicting the re-union of *bombur* (the bee) and *yambarzal* (the narcissus) after their separation by Winter and his allies, the poet has symbolized the ultimate victory of the creative urges over the forces of destruction and has allegorically suggested the deliverance of Kashmir from the clutches of mischief-mongers. Kamil's *Ravaroopi* similarly depicts the ultimate defeat of Autumn by Spring; while the latest opera *Heemal Nagrai* jointly by Nadim and Roshan (also based upon a

folk-tale of the land) presents the idea of humanizing the sub-human, not through 'civilizing' devices, but through the all-transcending charms of genuine love.

Thus the latest trend in Kashmiri poetry appears to be a return to symbolism, of course with a marked difference; yet it often betrays a tendency to conceal more than it reveals. And when formalism predominates, the 'poem' is reduced to the expression of some sort of literary gymnastics. Nevertheless, we find that new Kashmiri literature on the whole is characterized by a lively interest in the eventful 'today' and genuine concern for a brighter 'tomorrow'. It is no doubt full of the present with all its prizes and problems, thrills and tribulations, smiles and sighs, and hopes and frustrations; but at the same time, it is mindful of the future with all its exacting demands on the present generation.

The nascent Kashmiri prose also has happily made a very significant start by keeping in close contact with the life 'as it is' and by striving for the realization of a new set-up 'as it should be'. It is hoped that with the growth of journalism in the Kashmiri language the essay, criticism and other neglected branches of Kashmiri literature also will come into due prominence. Now that the frustrating psychology of political indecision and economic chaos is gone, there is no reason why Kashmiri literature should not turn the corner and calmly explore new fields of artistic expression. The trend of dynamic realism born of a growing consciousness of the social role of art in life should now get more and more defined in terms of concrete achievements and the feverish craze for newness in form and content which has been fast subsiding should now be channelled into a conscious experimentation in integrative craftsmanship. That indeed is a task for the present generation of literary artists in Kashmir.

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MALAYALAM LITERATURE

C. KUNHAN RAJA

INTRODUCTION

MALAYALAM is the language spoken by about fourteen million people on the narrow stretch of beautiful land known as Kerala, lying between the Western Ghats with the Arabian Sea as its southern end. The country was known to ancient Greeks and is mentioned in the Asokan Inscriptions, in the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* and in the works of Kalidasa. But no literature is known as belonging to Kerala till about the ninth century A.D. Even of that time what we have is scanty and of doubtful date. In the fourteenth century, however, we see Malayalam as a fully developed language with a very considerable literature, known to us mainly through quotations in a work on Grammar and Linguistics entitled *Lilathilakam.*

An attempt has been made to trace Malayalam to Tamil as an off-shoot in the middle period of the development of Tamil. There is, however, no evidence to support this thesis. When we see Malayalam for the first time as a literary language, we find an abundance of original vocabulary with its own grammar and metre and poetic modes. Later on Malayalam came to be dominated by Sanskrit, with the Sanskrit metres also appearing prominently in poetry. Nevertheless, the great literary artists of the language adopted only the original Malayalam metres and used only such Sanskrit words as had become part of its vocabulary. Sanskrit metres and Sanskrit vocabulary, however, continued to influence some types of literature that developed in the language, along with simple, pure Malayalam poetry in Malayalam metres.

The classical period of Malayalam literature may be said to begin from the fifteenth century with the appearance of *Krishna Gatha* by Cherusseri. In the period prior to classical Malayalam, we observe three distinct literary schools, one showing the influence of Tamil, the other showing a similar influence of Sanskrit and the third consisting mostly of folk songs and other indigenous forms. These schools have contributed to the moulding of a classical language which attained a permanent form in the hands of Ezhuttachan who lived in the sixteenth century. The

place of Ezhuttachan in Malayalam literature is comparable to that of Tulsidas in Hindi and of Kamban in Tamil. His *Addhyatma Ramayanam* and *Maha Bharatam* are read with religious reverence by the vast majority. Ezhuttachan is the author of several other works. All his works are characterized by high literary and philosophical content.

For about two hundred years from the middle of the seventeenth century, Kathakali literature was the most prevalent form in Kerala. The outstanding names are Kottarakkara Thampuran, Kottayam Kerala Varma, Unnayi Varier and Irayimman Thampi.

It is not possible to mention all the important writers of Malayalam in the middle period, but mention has to be made of another giant who can be compared with Ezhuttachan. He is Kunchan Nambiar who lived in the first half of the eighteenth century. He is acclaimed as the founder and promoter of the form 'Tullal Pattu' and is the first people's poet of Kerala. He has taken his stories from the *Puranas*, but they are mere pegs to hang his satire and criticism of society on. He gave a local setting to the *Puranas* and narrated the stories in a language simple and colloquial. Yet his poetry has classic dignity and is full of literary finish of a high order and maintains the true spirit of the original.

Nineteenth Century

It is true that Malayalam had a kind of prose as early as the fourteenth century as evidenced by the commentary of the famous *Arthasastra* by Kautilya. But modern prose, especially literary prose, came to its own only in the nineteenth century. In this connection the efforts of the Christian Missionaries should be remembered with gratitude. They were really the pioneers of liberal education and translation of religious and moral writings into Malayalam.

By the middle of the nineteenth century the impact of new education began to be felt in Kerala. The new schools required textbooks of every kind. The immediate result of this was a popular movement for the translation of classics from Sanskrit. Also original poetry moved away from the popular basis that earlier writers had given to it and turned more toward classical literary forms imitating the Kavya style of Sanskrit. The leader of this school, which in spite of its rigidity and devotion to formalism

produced some outstanding works, was Kerala Varma (d. 1915), the author of *Mayura Sandesam.*

Side by side with this, however, a new school was also gaining popularity. Its main characteristic was the use of popular speech as a vehicle of literary expression. The leaders of this movement were the Rajas of Kodungalloor and Venmani Nampudirippad. Kodungalloor Kunhikuttan Thampuran and his brother were both outstanding Sanskrit scholars but in their works in Malayalam they made no attempt to use the grammatical structure of Sanskrit, as Kerala Varma had done. Venmani went further and wrote his poems in what may be called the daily speech of the people, and thereby gave vigour and directness to Malayalam literature. Though the quality of their original writing was not high, they may well be claimed to be the first 'modern writers' in Malayalam.

A similar tendency was noticeable in prose also. The early traditions of Malayalam prose of which we have some good examples in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries became overlaid with Sanskrit formations during the period of classical revival. Here again, it was Kerala Varma who set the standard. Though his own artificial and highly ornate style found but few imitators, the Trivandrum or Southern school tended to lean heavily on Sanskrit, not only borrowing liberally from Sanskrit vocabulary but insisting on a standard of literary purism in the use of Sanskrit words which was unnatural to a growing language.

But this style never attained popularity. The newspapers and magazines that had taken over the shaping of prose found it too cumbersome for daily use. Besides, a new master had arisen in the use of popular prose. Chandu Menon's famous novel, *Indulekha,* boldly challenged the doctrine of the classicists and demonstrated effectively that literary prose of the highest quality could be written in the daily language of the people.

A notable personality who discovered a middle way both in prose and poetry and provided Malayalam with the necessary basis for future development was A. R. Rajaraja Varma, grammarian, poet and critic, whose *Kerala Paniniyam* gave Malayalam its first authoritative grammar. He may be said to have standardized the language, rejecting alike the Sanskritization followed by Kerala Varma and the colloquialism attempted by Venmani. This preparatory period may be said to have ended with 1915.

It is, however, important to note that this period, though comparatively poor in the quality of its original production, was one of immense activity in every field. It provided Malayalam with an extensive literature of translation both from Sanskrit and English. The great epics, dramas and even some of the Kavyas like *Kumarasambhava* were made available in unabridged and excellent translations. Nor were English classics neglected, though the quality of their translation was not high. It produced also a few outstanding works of fiction, Chandu Menon's *Indulekha* and *Sarada* and C. V. Raman Pillai's *Martanda Varma*. In the field of drama, while following the classical forms, the writers of the period tried to discuss modern themes as in the case of *Kalyani Natakam* of Kochunni Thampuran dealing with the social life of the period and *Mariamma Natakam* of Mavelikkara Kocheeppan Tharakan, reflecting the life in the Christian community. Nor were other aspects of literature neglected. The short humorous essay found a master in Kunjiraman Nayanar who, writing under the name of 'Kesari', popularized this genre of literature. Serious literary criticism of anceint masters and modern poets, applying the critical standards of the West, was successfully attempted by P. K. Narayana Pillai and Anthapai.

On the whole, however, it may be said that the period was one of preparation, which made the language rich and flexible, provided it with the necessary conditions of development, introduced new forms, techniques and ideas, and generally gave a great impetus to literary activity. Of the voluminous literature of the period, apart from translations of classics, few would seem to have enduring qualities. The great Mahakavyas in the style of *Raghuvamsa* and *Naishadha*, in which the major poets of the day exhibited their scholarship and poetic craft, are unlikely to be read in the future except as literary curiosities, but they represented a magnificent effort, and had the effect of shaping the language.

Modern Period

The first intimation of a revolutionary change in taste was the publication of Kumaran Asan's *Nalini*. It was a short poem and the theme was love, but it was love with a difference. Kumaran Asan handled the theme of a love which had become sublimated through the realization of higher life, with masterly skill and subtilty. Thus he broke away from the sterile 'Sringara' of the

past, which basing itself on the erotic poets of Sanskrit was taken up with the moods and attitudes of 'Nayikas'. Asan also discarded the tradition of luxuriant phraseology which Kerala Varma had introduced, and adopted in its place a direct and refined expression, emphasizing more the subtilty of ideas than the outward form.

Though *Nalini* may be said to be the first expression of the new spirit, it took a few years more before the classical style gave way and Malayalam literature stepped on to the modern stage. The central figure of this movement was Vallathol, whose change over to new poetry may be dated with the publication of *Oru Chitram* (A Picture) in 1915. Vallathol was a poet of eminence in the old classical school when the spirit of the new age transformed him. He had already published a sloka-by-sloka translation of Valmiki's *Ramayana*, and also according to the fashion of the day produced a Mahakavya entitled *Chitrayogam* in eighteen cantos. What changed him was the great national movement which was then sweeping the country. The first Great War had unleashed the forces of national revival and everywhere men were yearning for a new life. Vallathol became the interpreter of this yearning for new a life, a trumpet voice of nationalism, not in the narrow spirit of exclusion, but in the positive manner of creating a national image, noble, high-spirited and idealistic. He discarded the traditional Sanskrit metres, in which he had previously written and took to the earlier traditions of the great Malayalam poets. For over a period of ten years his poetic genius poured forth poems, not only charged with emotion and sentiment but perfect in literary form. They touched every subject of national importance, the cry of social and economic injustices no less than the call of the future. But Vallathol even at this period was not merely a poet of nationalism or social discontent. His great masterpiece, *Magdalana Mariam*,[1] was also the product of this period. In that work he deals with the life and conversion of Mary Magdalene, creating around the figure of Christ a remarkable atmosphere of divine peace.

The new movement developed around three figures, Vallathol himself, Kumaran Asan and Ulloor Parameswara Iyer. Ulloor was a scholar of distinction and in his earlier days had

[1]Sponsored by the Sahitya Akademi for translation into other Indian languages.—*Ed.*

scrupulously followed the literary technique of Kerala Varma and even written a Mahakavya of some merit, *Umakeralam*. Though wedded to old theories he was carried away by the enthusiasm of the new movement. But as he was a revivalist in social matters, he could not catch the spirit of the age. He was always looking backward and his themes in his major works like *Pingala*—also a story of a prostitute who attained salvation as in the case of Mary Magdalene—and *Karnabhushanam* were always an evocation of the past. His language, too, was ornate and strained, full of *samasas* in the Sanskrit style, as a result of which his work never attained any great popularity.

Kumaran Asan's case was different. More than even Vallathol, the new movement helped him to express himself with an intensity and vigour which raised him to a place among the highest in Malayalam literature. The conscious departure from the traditional line is evident even in the earliest poem, *Veena Puvu* (Fallen Flower). His earlier works, *Nalini* and *Leela*, had dealt with unfulfilled love. They showed a talent of very high quality. But it was only when he took to social themes that his genius blossomed to the full. In *Duravastha*, *Chandala Bhikshuki* and *Karuna*, Kumaran Asan produced three masterpieces, the first two of which echoed the agonized cry of a community which had for long suffered from social prejudices. *Duravastha* deals with the life of a Brahmin woman who during the days of the Mopla rebellion had lost her home and relations and had become the wife of an untouchable. It is a poem of moving beauty and written with a passion which is deeply sincere. Another poem of his, *Chintavishtayaya Sita*, is a study in womanhood and though much criticized by the orthodox for the truly human feelings that Sita expresses, as a poem it is undoubtedly a work of very high quality. His main achievement is the creation of a galaxy of living characters. His style is sometimes rugged; but in characterization he is definitely superior to the other two masters.

Around these three masters Malayalam poetry developed to its present stature. It is not possible within the limits of this essay to more than allude to the more outstanding names of the period. Among the lesser poets who have been in the forefront of romanticism the name of V. C. Balakrishna Panikkar has to be mentioned first. Though he died a premature death he left a deep impression on his generation. Nalappat Narayana Menon is not a poet who

has written much, but some of his works, especially *Kannunir Thulli*, an elegiac poem on the death of his wife, is of enduring quality. Deeply sincere in its emotion, *Kannunir Thulli* is a work which touches the most profound truths of life. A tendency to reflection can be seen in all his poems—especially in *Chakravalam* (Horizon) and *Oru Manalthari* (A Particle of Sand) which makes him a poet for the few rather than for the multitude.

Another notable figure who passed away at a very early age was Changampuzha Krishna Pillai, who achieved an immense popularity in his life-time by the musical quality of his verse and a sense of despondency which he voiced in his poetry. His first major work was a pastoral elegy, entitled *Ramanan*, on the death in tragic circumstances of his friend Idappalli Raghavan Pillai, himself a poet of unusual talent and promise. *Ramanan* which was written in the poet's early twenties is a work of haunting beauty. Its eerie music closely fits in with the theme, enabling the poet to convey to his readers a sense of desolation, which mere words would not have effectively done. Changampuzha was a voluminous writer and his work has profoundly affected the younger generation. Though his friend Idappally has not written much, he has left quite a few high class poems which will be read with great interest for years to come.

One of the most versatile modern writers is Sardar K. M. Panikkar; in fact, so versatile is he and so well known outside his province as a diplomat, historian and a writer of distinction in English that very few people outside Kerala know that he is also one of the leading writers in Malayalam. Poet, dramatist, novelist and critic, there is hardly a branch of literature which he has not enriched. Of his poetical works, *Chintatarangini*, *Pankiparinayam* and *Ambapali* deserve special mention. *Kumarasambhavam*, *Inappakshikal* and *Patinjaremuri* are a few of his translations in verse and among his dramatic works written in the classical style *Bhishmar*, *Mandodari* and *Dhruvaswamini* may be mentioned. His style is simple and elegant and he is at ease in both Sanskrit and Dravidian metres. Among his prose works in Malayalam, the best known are his *Autobiography* and the historical novel, *Keralasimham*[2]. His vigorous intellect, wide culture and historical perspective are evident in all his writings.

[2]Recently translated and published in Hindi under the auspices of the Sahitya Akademi.—*Ed.*

The most outstanding of the poets that came into prominence during this period is G. Sankara Kurup. He attained the maturity of his powers in the period that followed. As a lyricist and as a poet who uses symbolism as his main technique, he has a high place among the poets of today. His work has a lapidarical quality, but what differentiates him from others, who specialize in the jewelled phrase, is his wide use of symbolism in expressing his thoughts. He is undoubtedly the leader of the younger generation of poets, championing their ideas and expressing their thoughts. He has been profoundly influenced by the social and economic urges of the modern world and his poetry reflects the progressivism of the younger school. But as in Vallathol there is a dichotomy in his attitude. In some ways he is orthodox, emphasizing the Indianness of his culture and the continuity of tradition. He is also, at the same time, in a measure, moved by the social theories of the Left.

A few other poets of the earlier period deserve individual mention. Kundoor Narayana Menon successfully introduced a new genre of poetry akin to ballad, the stories of which were taken from popular songs. His special contribution to it, however, was that he eschewed all Sanskrit words and wrote in what was called 'Pacha' or pure, unadulterated Malayalam. His best known work, *Komappan*, was a remarkable achievement; for apart from the verbal acrobatics of writing a whole narrative poem without the use of a single Sanskrit word, Kundoor was able to import into his verses a freshness, vigour and literary beauty which were exceptional. Kattakkayathil Cheriyan Mappillai was another poet of the old school, whose Mahakavya entitled *Sri Yesu Vijayam* or the Victory of Jesus, is an epic version of the main incidents of the Old Testament and the life of Christ. Also of the old school but still vigorous in his literary activities is Vadakkumkur Rajaraja Varma, author of numerous Mahakavyas, the most important of which, *Raghavabhyudayam*, shows him at the height of his power.

At all times Malayalam has had its complement of women writers. In the older period, before 1915, we had Thottakkat Ikkavu Amma, whose drama *Subhadrarjunam*, written in the classical style of mixed verse and prose, earned her a deserved reputation as a poet of quality. In the more recent period, also in the field of poetry, the works of Nalappat Balamani Amma, Lalitham-

bika Antharjanam, Mary John Thottam and Muthukulam Parvati Amma are worthy of notice. Balamani Amma may be described as the poet of motherhood. Apart from its high emotional content, her work is characterized by meticulous attention to form and style, and a general sense of appropriateness. Lalithambika Antharjanam, though better known as a short story writer, is also a poet of distinction. Mary John Thottam, who after a short career in the literary world became a nun, showed the philosophical and religious bent of her mind in her writings. Her poems, especially her 'Soliloquy of the Soul' in the collection *Kavitaramam*, though immature in style, showed her as a contemplative poet of a very high order.

A New Turn

Malayalam poetry began to take a new turn by about 1936. The impetus of the national movement had died down and a younger school came into prominence whose inspiration was mainly from left-wing politics. Supported by a school of powerful critics who tore the veil of insincerity and false sentiment from the writings of the earlier poets, they made a frontal attack on the so-called literature of reaction, and ushered in what has since come to be known as 'Purogamana Vadam' or the progressive school. The champions of this school in the field of criticism are A. Balakrishna Pillai, Joseph Mundassery and M. P. Paul. The poetry which this school produced was not of very high quality; its success was mainly in the field of the short story and the novel. But it must be granted that it had great influence on many of the leading writers, by providing them with a new outlook. Especially in the case of Vallathol and Sankara Kurup, the impact of 'progressive' ideas has been remarkable. The purely 'progressive' school also produced some poets of talent, among whom may be mentioned N. V. Krishna Warrier, Akkittam, Olappamanna, Vayalar Ramavarma, P. Bhaskaran, Kedamangalam Pappukutty, Idasseri Govindan Nair, O. N. V. Kurup and Anujan.

Though it may legitimately be claimed that during the last twenty years there is no poet who has not been influenced at least in an imperceptible manner by 'progressive' ideas, the main stream of Malayalam poetry has not been diverted from its channel. The three outstanding poets of the younger school, Vailoppalli Shridhara Menon, Vennikkulam Gopala Kurup and Palai

Narayanan Nair, are poets in the genuine tradition of Malayalam poetry, though greatly influenced by 'progressive' ideas. Palai's *Keralam Valarunnu* (Kerala Grows) is a poem in the epic manner about modern Kerala, trying to weave into a single work the legends, personalities and trends of the Malayalam speaking region. The older school has not by any means died. P. Kunhiraman Nayar, K. K. Raja and others uphold that tradition with some distinction.

PROSE

The new period (from 1919) has been especially notable in the field of prose literature. The historical novel attained its maturity with C. V. Raman Pillai's *Ramaraja Bahadur*, dealing with Tipu's invasion, Appan Thampuran's *Bhutarayar* and K. M. Panikkar's *Keralasimham*. More important, however, was the emergence of the new type of sociological novel, studying and describing conditions in a changing society. *Indulekha* and *Sarada* had set the model from the point of view of romantic writing. But the new school discarded the romanticism of the past and went in for naked realism. *Apphante Makal* was a study of Nambudiri-Nayar relationship and this may be considered the first attempt in a realistic novel. Basheer's *Balyakala Sakhi* (Friend of Childhood) is another notable work in this field. But the writer who raised the realistic and sociological novel to the level of great literature was Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai. Thakazhi first achieved fame as a short story writer of exceptional gifts. In that genre he is the supreme master in Malayalam. But with *Thotiyute Makan* he entered the field of novel also with great distinction. His novel, *Rantitangazhi*[3] (Two Measures of Grain), was a detailed study of landless peasant labour in the marshy lands near Alleppey. The vigour of characterization and the realistic study of social conditions raised the work immediately to the position of a classic. His recent novel, *Chemmeen*[4] (The Shrimps), shifts the scene to the humble fisherfolk of Alleppey. It is the best novel so far written in Malayalam and is a masterpiece of its kind.

As one of the early writers who has made a substantial contribu-

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[3]This novel has been selected by the Sahitya Akademi for translation into other Indian languages. Its Hindi translation entitled *Do Sar Dhan* has been published.—*Ed.*

[4]This work has been awarded the Sahitya Akademi Prize for 1957.—*Ed.*

tion to the modern short story and novel in Malayalam, the name of P. Keshavadev deserves mention. His *Odavil Ninnu* (From the Gutter) is one of the best novels in the language. S. K. Pottekkat's *Vishakanyaka* is also a work of great merit. Another novelist who deserves mention is Joseph Mundassery whose novel, *Professor*, is a moving story of a poor teacher's lot. His *Kontayum Kurusum* deals with life among the poorer classes of Christians and the influence of the Church on them.

The short story attained early maturity in Malayalam and the general level of writing has been high. The successful writers in the field are too numerous to mention; but undeniably the master of this genre is Thakazhi, whose stories do not suffer by comparison with those of Maupassant or Tchekov. Others worthy of mention are Ponkunnam Varkey, K. T. Muhammad, Basheer, P. C. Kuttikrishnan, Pottekkat, Kovoor, Karoor, Saraswati Amma and Lalithambika Antharjanam. Varkey, Basheer, Pottekkat and Kuttikrishnan may be described as left wing writers whose themes mainly relate to problems of social injustice. Kuttikrishnan's *Ummachu* has been claimed as an outstanding novel. Lalithambika Antharjanam describes mainly the social contradictions in the Nambudiri community and her stories are therefore of exceptional value as throwing some light on the social life of a closed section of the people.

Drama

There has also been a marked literary activity in the field of drama. The tradition in Malayalam was of considering drama as literature, as a *drishya kavya* in the style of Kalidasa, Bhavabhuti and others; and that tradition is by no means dead. But with the growth of new interests the acting plays in Western style began to attain popularity, though most of the numerous plays which are written for production on the stage can hardly claim a literary quality.

Of these the most important is C. V. Raman Pillai's *Kuruppilla Kalari* (School without a Teacher), depicting the anarchy of social life among the Nayars, a powerful social comedy which captures for posterity the unsettled conditions of a transitional period. E. V. Krishna Pillai was another writer who contributed to the growth of the stage by his historical plays. Kainikkara Padmanabha Pillai wrote an outstanding drama on

the Passion of Christ entitled *Kalvarivile Kalpapadapam*. N. Krishna Pillai and Idasseri Govindan Nair are also dramatists of distinction whose works show considerable literary merit. Among the younger and successful playwrights may be mentioned Chellappan Nair, K. T. Muhammad and T. N. Gopinathan Nair.

Criticism

The literature of criticism also registered remarkable development during this period. The earlier critics were mainly concerned with the classics and contributed much to the growth of a healthy critical literature. The names of P. K. Narayana Pillai and K. Ramakrishna Pillai stand out among them. But with M. P. Paul, Mundassery and A. Balakrishna Pillai a new spirit enters Malayalam criticism. M. P. Paul's study of the form of the novel and the short story was a path-finder for the younger writers ; Joseph Mundassery combined classical scholarship with an ultra-modern outlook and was the main spokesman of the modern school. A. Balakrishna Pillai can justifiably claim to have introduced the French literary forms into Malayalam and it is his advocacy that gave the writings of Maupassant the great influence which they came to possess in Kerala. Kuttikrishna Marar and Murkoth Kunhappa, Guptan Nair and others helped in the growth of new ideas and today the critical literature in Malayalam, though heavily prejudiced in favour of 'progressivism', can claim to be well equipped and competent, with a fair knowledge of world trends.

Biography, Travelogue, etc.

Another form of prose literature which has made notable advance in recent times is biography. P. K. Parameswaran Nair's life of P. K. Narayana Pillai (which was followed by the same author's biography of C. V. Raman Pillai) was a work which set the standard in the field. The earlier biographies of personalities like Kerala Varma, Rajaraja Varma and Ulloor Parameswara Iyer were more in the form of monumental panegyrics, uncritical and with no claim to objectivity. Parameswaran Nair took the art of biography seriously and brought not only a spirit of criticism and research into it, but a sense of literary craftsmanship. Considerable work in this field has been done by I. C. Chacko, A. D. Harisarma and Dr K. M. George.

Autobiographical writings also began to make their appearance. The classic in this field is the *Smarana Mandalam* by P. K. Narayana Pillai, critic, poet and scholar, who attained high distinction as a lawyer and judge. P. K.'s autobiography is a panoramic view of conditions in Travancore in the earlier part of his life, written with the practised skill of a master. Another notable work in the genre is by E. V. Krishna Pillai, whose rather unsettled life lent itself well to autobiography of interest. Incidentally it may be mentioned here that Krishna Pillai is considered to be one of the outstanding humorous writers of this century. Another name equally outstanding in this field is that of Sanjayan (M. R. Nair). *Atma Katha* by K. M. Panikkar, *Jeevitasamaram* by C. Keshavan, and *Kazhinja Kalangal* by K. P. Kesava Menon are a few of the important works in this field.

Malayalam was familiar with travelogues even from early times. A remarkable description of a journey to Europe by a Christian priest has come down to us from the eighteenth century. In the nineteenth century the fashion was to write travel books in verse. The first prose work of any quality in modern times which could be called travel literature was by K. P. Kesava Menon whose *Bilatti Visesham*, which may be translated as 'Report on England' described the experiences of his stay as a student in that country. It is, however, Pottekkat who has specialized in this kind of writing. His travel literature covers a great part of the world—Asia, Africa and Europe. Pottekkat has an eye for interesting things and is master of a simple and lucid prose style. Other works which may be mentioned in this connection are K. M. Panikkar's *Apatkaramaya Yatra* (A Dangerous Journey) describing his wartime travels and *Chinayile oru Yatra* (A Journey in China) dealing with an extensive tour in China.

History of Literature

Literary history has also been the subject of much scholarly work in recent years. The pioneer attempt in this connection was P. Govinda Pillai's History of Malayalam Literature, *Malayala Bhashacharitram*, published in the last decade of the 19th century. Since then there has been continuous research in this subject bringing to light many ancient works and forgotten authors. The most notable discovery in this connection was *Lilathilakam*, a work on Malayalam linguistics and rhetoric, written in Sanskrit

in the fifteenth century. *Lilathilakam* was a veritable anthology of early Malayalam literature, as it quoted profusely from previous writers by way of illustration. Among the works so attended was *Unninili Sandesam*, a 'dutakavyam' in the style of *Meghaduta* written in the fourteenth century. Others, including some earlier works, have since come to light, such as *Unniyati Charitam* and *Unniyachi Charitam*. It is interesting to note that more than five critical edition of *Unninili Sandesam* have been published within the last ten years, as also critical editions of *Lilathilakam*. Of these the most important are those of Elankulam Kunjan Pillai and Suranad Kunjan Pillai who between them have covered a very wide field.

Literary history proper found two masters: R. Narayana Panikkar and Ulloor Parameswara Iyer. Narayana Panikkar's history, entitled *Kerala Bhasha Sahitya Charitram*[5] in seven volumes, in spite of the controversial character of some of its judgements, is a work of immense erudition. The publication of Parameswara Iyer's volumes, *Kerala Sahitya Charitram*, undertaken posthumously by the University of Travancore, is not yet complete. It is a literary history of Kerala and not of Malayalam, for it deals also with the Kerala poets who wrote in Sanskrit. Vadakkumkur Rajaraja Varma's *Kerala Samskrita Sahitya Charitram* (History of Sanskrit Literature in Kerala), though profuse and untrustworthy in regard to dates, is a pioneer work of importance.

LINGUISTICS, HISTORY, ETC.

Linguistic and other researches connected with Malayalam have also made considerable progress in recent times. A good deal of valuable groundwork has been done in this field by two masters, A. R. Rajaraja Varma and Attoor Krishna Pisharodi. Dr K. Godavarma's studies on philology and the same scholar's researches on loan words in Malayalam are specially noteworthy. Another notable contribution in this field is by Dr K. M. George whose study of the linguistic structure of *Ramacaritaṁ* has helped greatly in a fuller understanding of the early evolution of Malayalam as a separate language. Dr S. K. Nayar's collections of folk dramas and ballad literature of Kerala have recovered for Malayalam a vast field of popular literature and are of great

[5]Awarded the Sahitya Akademi Prize in 1955 for the most outstanding publication in Malayalam since 1947.—*Ed.*

importance both to the study of the spoken language and as a reflection of social life in the mediaeval period.

History is the most neglected department of literature in Malayalam. Except for K. P. Padmanabha Menon's History of Cochin in two volumes (*Cochirajya Charitram*), there has been no historical writing of any note in the language. *The Cochin State Manual* written by C. Achyuta Menon in English was also published in an authorized Malayalam version simultaneously. Ilamkulam Kunjan Pillai's *Some Dark Pages of Kerala History* and Dr Godavarma's studies of some of the earlier copper-plate grants are the only contributions worth mentioning in this connection.

Journalism

The importance of periodical journalism to the rapid growth of Malayalam deserves special mention. In the earlier period at the beginning of the century, *Malayala Manorama* under Kandathil Varghese Mappilai set itself deliberately to encourage literature. Apart from opening its columns to literary contributions, the *Manorama* organized the first literary conference in Kerala, the Bhasha Poshini Sabha, and gave a great impetus to literary activity. It also organized the publication of a literary magazine, the *Bhasha Poshini*, as a vehicle of creative literature. Other magazines which attained notable literary distinction were the *Vidya Vinodini* and the *Rasika Ranjini*, edited by a group of scholars from Trichur, the *Atma Poshini*, which was edited for some time by Vallathol, and the *Mangalodayam* of which the leading spirit was Appan Thampuran. A remarkable experiment of a monthly magazine exclusively devoted to poetry known as *Kavana Kaumudi* flourished for over twenty-five years under the editorship of P. V. Krishna Varier. There was hardly any poet of the time who did not contribute to it, and many of the younger writers gained their first experience in the *Kaumudi*. Vallathol, Ulloor, Sankara Kurup and others were regular contributors and the *Kaumudi* earned a place in literature by the first publication in its pages of many works, like Vallathol's *Vilasa Lathika*, which later on came to be accepted as classics. The Samastha Kerala Sahitya Parishad conducted a magazine exlusively devoted for literary articles and a large number of contributions relating to history and literary criticism as well as some ancient works were published in it.

From the thirties it is not the monthly magazines that have

shaped literature, but the literary weeklies published by popular daily newspapers. The *Mathrubhumi* weekly of Kozhikode and the *Malayala Rajyam* weekly of Quilon became the forum of younger writers. Their wide circulation helped the authors to reach a larger range of readers than the purely literary magazines.

Before closing this survey, a brief allusion may be made to the literature of translation. Originally translation was mainly from Sanskrit. In fact, by the first decade of this century most Sanskrit classics had been rendered into Malayalam. The translation from English during the earlier period was mainly of well-known classics. From the beginning translations from Bengali, mainly through English, became popular and the works of Bankim Chandra Chatterji were popular with readers of all classes. The pre-eminence that Rabindranath Tagore achieved was reflected in a new wave of translations from Bengali.

After the First Great War when the interests began to widen, translations began to appear of French, Russian and other classics. Though in most cases the works were not translated direct from the original, their influence in shaping the mind of the younger writers should not be underestimated. Especially worthy of mention is the translation of *Les Miserables* by Nalappat Narayana Menon, of Guy de Maupassant's stories by A. Balakrishna Pillai, and of Tolstoy's *Resurrection* by C. Govinda Kurup. Political classics like Mahatma Gandhi's *Experiments with Truth* and Jawaharlal Nehru's *Autobiography* became, in their translations, classics in Malayalam. From other sources also Malayalam drew sustenance. FitzGerald's version of *Omar Khayyam* has had seven different Malayalam renderings, including one by G. Sankara Kurup and another by K. M. Panikkar. The *Holy Quran* has been rendered into Malayalam by a distinguished Muslim scholar. Vallathol has been a prolific translator. Apart from the *Ramayana* of Valmiki, he has rendered into Malayalam five *Puranas*, Kalidasa's *Sakuntala*, all Vatsaraja's plays, six plays of Bhasa, the *Gatha Sapta Sati* of Hala from Prakrit, and finally the entire *Rig Veda Samhita*[6]. The translation and interpretation of Panini's Sanskrit Grammar by Sri I. C. Chacko is a notable contribution in this field[7].

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[6]Its publication has been sponsored by the Sahitya Akademi with a grant of Rs. 15,000.—*Ed.*

[7]This has won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1956.

One significant point may be emphasized at the end. At the beginning of the century literature was still a matter of class. Its pursuit was confined to the higher castes and it was around the courts of rulers and the aristocracy that it flourished. The great figures at the beginning of the period, Kerala Varma, Rajaraja Varma, Kunhi Kuttan Thampuran and others were closely connected with ruling families. Gradually the circle widened. In the period between 1915 and 1936, literature had become the possession of the middle classes, the classes who were educated in English and whose social urges and economic attitudes were those of general self-satisfaction, except, as we have noticed, in the case of Kumaran Asan in his revolt against social injustice and of others in favour of political freedom. In the thirties this situation undergoes a radical change. The muse has taken leave of palaces and comfortable middle-class homes and taken her residence with the poor, the lowly and the depressed. Literature has become the inheritance of the people at large. In Kerala where there is almost universal education, at least among the lower age groups, and the percentage of literacy is the highest in India, it was to be expected that literature would become generally a matter for the people as a whole. Today all classes and castes are represented among the younger creative writers and if the formalism of classical scholarly verse has disappeared with the courtly graces of Kerala Varma, and the mellifluous diction of *Mayura Sandesam* no longer moves us, what has taken their place is something more virile, genuine and closely related to the life of the people.

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MARATHI LITERATURE

M. V. RAJADHYAKSHA

INTRODUCTORY

THE Marathi language is a little more than a thousand years old; Marathi literature is only about two hundred years younger. The process of the new-born language hardening into a vehicle for literature was quickened by a social urge. A spiritual democracy was seeking voice. It had no use for the ritual-ridden priest and, therefore, none for his Sanskrit. It would have no unnatural barrier between man and God, and between man and man. A noble sequence of Saint-poets in Dnyaneshwar (1271-1296), Namdeo (1270-1350), Ekanath (1433-1599), Tukaram (1608-1649) and Ramdas (1608-1681), spoke to the people in their own language, endowing the people with nation-hood and the language with strength. Dnyaneshwar's was a rich style created, however spontaneously, out of a distilled learning; Tukaram's was the racy idiom of the soil, equal to both defiance and tenderness. Earlier, in the 12th and 13th centuries, Mukundaraj, and the Mahanubhawas, dissenters from the Vedic orthodoxy, had used the language with confidence in its capacity.

But the more secular urge would not be denied for long. It found expression in the re-telling of the *Puranas*; for example Ekanath used the *Ramayana* and the *Bhagawata* for instruction. His grandson, Mukteshwar (1574-1645), used the ancient epics for a more literary purpose, creating vivid word-pictures and carefully cultivating formal graces learnt from Sanskrit. But, inevitably, Sanskrit 'form' strengthened its grip on Marathi poetry, as one Pandit-poet after another in the following two centuries looked upon his art as a ground for the exhibition of virtuosity. Vaman and Raghunath of the 17th century, and Moropant of the 18th, were the more prominent of the Pandit-poets. But they were for the few, and the common man sought his poetry in the heroic ballad and the erotic 'lavani'. The heritage of the Saint-poets, however, continued, as it has continued to this day, to bring hope and peace to the wearied.

Prose was very slow in coming up. The Mahanubhawas used it, but they locked it up in a code. At the Maratha courts,

chroniclers, diarists and letter-writers produced a functional prose. But in the 19th century, with the arrival of the printing press and the establishment of a new set-up in Government and education, prose acquired a new utility and stature, and in quantity very soon took a lead over verse. Periodicals were started mostly for the dissemination of the newly acquired western learning. They soon matured into competent instruments of the lively controversies set off by the impact of the new on the old. Men like G. H. Deshmukh ('Lokahitwadi') and Jotirao Phule wrote of our social degeneration with the eloquence of earnestness. The first novel in Marathi, Baba Pudmanji's *Yamuna Paryatan* (1857) was on social reform, even if tawdry romances soon swamped the field. It was a lean period for poetry, most of the work being in the nature of modest verse-exercises. But even there discontent stirred beneath the staid surface. The new was striking root in the old soil.

1885-1920 : POETRY

With the publication in 1885 of the first poem of 'Keshavsut' (1866--1905) and the first novel of Hari Narayan Apte (1864-1919), each the pioneer of modernity in his particular form, modern Marathi literature was launched. The renaissance, of which this modernity was the expression in literature, had a complex background. In it met diverse strands like the influence of western thought, particularly of liberalism, the stimulus provided by English literature, particularly of the Romantics, and by European nationalism, and the glorification of the past, particularly of Maharashtra, as a bellicose reaction to the irritating superiority of the British and of the West as a whole. The Brahmo-Samaj, part of a similar, if less complex, renaissance in Bengal, was probably yet another influence.

Keshavsut's revolt was not merely literary. It went far beyond experiments in form and diction and was even more than the introduction of the personal note. Poetry, to Keshavsut, had an agitational role, and he used it effectively to denounce the many corruptions in our life. An even higher restlessness induced lyrics which speak of some elusive rapture of the spirit. This 'poets' poet' animated most of the major poets of his generation and the following one without cramping the individuality of any of them by the constraint of a 'school'. Reverend Narayan

Waman Tilak (1865-1919) wrote feelingly of the soft beauties of home and nature, and sought in them, with child-like faith, the divinity that alone could bring peace to the spirit. The anguish of Vinayak (1872-1909) was of a split in the personality. The discord between a conventional morality and a weak flesh caused a guilt-complex, and his poetry strained to cover it up with melodramatic pictures of the glory of the past. A similar discord, but not so easily resolved, gives to the work of Ram Ganesh Gadkari (1885-1919)—the poet 'Govindagraj'—both in drama and poetry, an even greater significance, as reflecting the unhappy co-existence of two incompatibles then attempted, half-unconsciously, by a section of the educated classes : the progressive, as sponsored by an Agarkar or a Keshavsut, and the revivalist as sponsored by a Tilak or a Chiplunkar. In his satirical sketches, full of boisterous humour, Gadkari makes social orthodoxy look pitiable; for the stage he finds its morality serviceable. Only it has to be over-coloured to make it acceptable—even to himself; hence melodrama, further heightened by his enviable mastery of language. Gadkari's phenomenal popularity, both as poet and dramatist, can be traced to the melodrama, the humour, and most of all, his style which cast a spell on the reader. They provided an escape from the drabnesses of life to the reader—and to the author, from the agony of an unintegrated and frustrated being. Even Balkavi (1890-1918), whose pure lyricism is a joy to the reader, came towards the end of his short life under the shadow of some frustration. The lovely world of dreams, of his child-like surrender to which were born exquisite lyrics, had started crumbling when mercifully death snatched away the younger poet. 'Bee'—Narayan Muralidhar Gupte (1872-1947)—had close affinity with Keshavsut, particularly in his passionate protests against the tyranny of orthodoxy, both social and literary; but his slender work had languished in obscurity till he passed sixty. Unlike him, Bhaskar Ramchandra Tambe (1874-1941) achieved great popularity and the tribute of almost general imitation—particularly after 1920. The success was of his song-quality and of a sensuousness of style which, with its use of traditional imagery, evoked effortless response. Tambe was from Madhyabharat; it gave his poetry a feudal-romantic setting and a languor which added an exotic appeal to it. This, after Keshavsut and his kind, meant a relapse into escapism. Another

major poet of the age, Chandrashekhar, whose careful workmanship was content with formal beauties after Sanskrit poetry and the Pandit-poets, strengthened the reversion. These two ways of poetry have continued to this day to struggle for supremacy. It is a projection on the literary level of a wider struggle.

Drama

The Marathi stage, born in 1843, soon grew out of an infancy of unscripted plays and stock characters. In B. P. Kirloskar (1843-1885), a producer-actor-dramatist, it achieved its first full-fledged expression. Kirloskar's *Saubhadra* (1882) has been a great draw all these years, but mainly on the strength of its music. G. B. Deval (1854-1916) acknowledged Kirloskar as his 'Guru', but struck out his own path. Of Deval's seven plays, six are immaculate adaptations from Sanskrit and English. The seventh, *Sharada*, still holds the stage with its realism of characterization and dialogue, though its theme—an old man buying a young bride—has grown stale. If the essential drama in the work of Deval and in the early work of K. P. Khadilkar (1872-1948) had set a firm tradition, the Marathi stage would have prospered better than its commercial success during the first two decades of the century would indicate. What prospered, however, was music, and that of the highest modes. Khadilkar's *Keechakvadha* (1910) achieved compelling drama in its political allegory, with Tilak and Lord Curzon as Bheema and Keechak respectively, and invited proscription. His historical plays have a similar power, at least some of it derived from Shakespeare. But the wrong things from Shakespeare, like plot-complication and irrelevant or parenthetical clowning, came in faster and smothered the right ones. Khadilkar declined into a playwright who tried, more and more feebly, to spice themes from the Puranas with modern—particularly political—morals. Music saved and sustained them on the stage. Shreepad Krishna Kolhatkar (1871-1934) tried to work out satirical comedy through romantic tangles—to the discomfiture of both satire and romance. His avowed championship of social reform was served much better by his humorous sketches than by his plays in which a self-sufficient humour clogged the drama. Gadkari, who acknowledged him as his master, won a far greater success, as said above, with a better contrived mixture of romance, humour, characterization and an irresistible prose style. The incongruities and

excesses of a Gadkari-play invite easy scoffing ; but its brilliance and total effect embarrass the scoffer. The more modest talents of Narsinh Chintaman Kelkar (1872-1947) combined fruitfully in his five plays, three of which drew their themes from history and two from mythology. These were the more eminent dramatists of the first phase of the modern Marathi stage. Between them, and a few others—notably some competent translators of Shakespeare—the stage derived various strengths; but realism was not one of them, at any rate, not a major one. As the stage became more aggressively 'musical', realism went on the defensive, if it did not capitulate utterly. The average play-goer did not miss it ; he had his entertainment, and also some broad moralizing out of mythology and history, without it. Even Vasudeoshastri Khare, a historian of repute, could not keep romance out of his historical plays. The romanticizing, however, was not designed for diversion, but for political edification. Thus did the stage reply to the stigmatizing British historian of Maharashtra and India. The novel replied even more vigorously.

Novel

The novel achieved abrupt maturity in Hari Narayan Apte (1864-1919) who, beginning with *Madhli Sthiti* (1885), wrote a few novels probing middle-class life—the best of them being *Pan Lakshyat Kon Gheto* ? (1890-93), the moving story of a child-widow—before the historical romance claimed the major part of his interest. This reflected a shift in the writer, and in his reader as well. Apte tempered his youthful ardour for social reform, imbibed from Agarkar, with a groping, after Ranade, for a compromise between reform and tradition. Stories from the history of the Marathas and the Rajputs, filled out with the stuff of romance, served to muffle the uneasy compromise. But the romance was designed for instruction, both political and moral. This was true of many writers of the period. The puritan-nationalist leaned on romance for both gratification and allegory. The average read-r was with him. He had no patience with social problems, either because he was convinced there were no such problems or because he would rather put them away in cold storage. When, later, having had his fill of history, he was prepared to look at the social problems for a change, authors seeking his gratification and admiration wrapped up the problems

in romance! As an artist, Apte was uneven. Serial publication was probably the cause of his plots being often slovenly and repetitious. But a deeper unity of conception and a firm sense for character more than made up for the lapses in construction. While Apte's eminence drew many writers to the form, there was none within measurable distance from him for some time. Narayan Hari Apte, who has been writing novels since 1909, tried the historical romance for some time before hitting on his vein of crying up domestic virtues. 'Nathmadhav'—D. M. Pitale (1882-1928), on the other hand, came to historical fiction after some indifferent work in the novel of contemporary life. His vigorous narration often recreated the past so vividly that the simple reader did not notice the incongruity of a modern colouring or the lack of finer qualities. History was a little safer in the hands of scholar-novelists like C. V. Vaidya, S. M. Paranjape and C. G. Bhanoo, but the spirit of the age required that even they dilute it with romance and moralizing. With the past overwhelming the present and romance confounding realism, the translations from the Bengali novel—of Bankim Chandra Chatterji, Sharat Chandra Chatterji, and Prabhatkumar Mukherji —by Gurjar, Mitra and Bhase stand out as a prop, however modest, to what was thus languishing. In that austere age, the novel—like most *belles-lettres*—was suspect as a triviality, and worse, as a corrupter. It could improve its standing only by improving its readers, and it could not do it better than by holding up the past as a lesson. The lesson, of course, was conventional. V. M. Joshi's *Ragini* (1915) with its sophisticated and contentious men and women examining problems of conduct and ethics—if a trifle artificially—lifted the teaching to a higher plane, and opened up a new field for the novel, which the author himself was to explore later with greater confidence and maturity.

The Prose of Argument

The prose of argument was regarded by this earnest age as the best that literature could achieve. The controversy that stimulated the most spirited prose—particularly in the earlier part of this period—was over social reform. Gopal Ganesh Agarkar (1856-1895) and Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920), who had collaborated in the founding of the *Kesari* —the weekly that was to spearhead and symbolize radical

nationalism in the hands of Tilak—soon came to a parting of ways, the relative urgency of social and political reform being the question at issue. Agarkar's weekly, *Sudharak*, stood up fearlessly for social reform, making light of the great odds that an unpopular cause raises against its champion. Agarkar's heroism, unspectacular by the nature of his mission, brought great strength and dignity to social reform. His style reflects his noble virtues. Tilak, who was nothing if not vigorous, was swept by the controversy to a position in the conservative camp which has, ever since, meant identification of him with social obscurantism. Apart from the merits of the controversy—and of the roles of the principal combatants—it awakened an ever-increasing section of readers to an intelligent understanding of the great issue. That the majority should be with the conservatives was inevitable. But it was equally inevitable that the new creed should penetrate the social mind, however slowly and imperceptibly, and provoke it into honest self-examination.

Tilak's political eminence overshadows his distinction as a master of prose style. His great learning enriched his prose without making it heavy, and gave it dignity without making it pompous. He could be blunt and sarcastic. Vishnushastri Chiplunkar (1850-1882), another of his earlier collaborators, achieved enormous reputation by a style which served him well in his offensive against social reform. It was a self-conscious style, rhetorical and involved; but it could be vituperative ! It also served him in stirring up national feeling. Chiplunkar's essays had, for long, a near-sacred quality for the revivalist. Shivram Mahadeo Paranjape (1864-1929), whose oratorical prowess has almost passed into legend, was also a revivalist, but he directed his energies mostly against the alien rulers who were finally nettled by his irony, his most effective weapon, into proscribing the collections of his essays. None was as close to Lokmanya Tilak as N. G. Kelkar who succeeded him to *Kesari*. Kelkar, an accomplished and versatile journalist, achieved a smooth combination of moderate abilities. There was hardly a prose form that he did not attempt ; and he wrote lucidly and agreeably in most of them. Most of his work, however, falls in the next period, and is, in some ways, characteristic of the first decade in it. The same could be said of Achyut Balwant Kolhatkar (1879-1931) who was so unlike Kelkar, and his bitter adversary.

He won the disfavour of the righteous and the admiration of the fast-growing class of readers from the lower social strata, particularly with his saucy journalism, which was so different from the staid kind then in vogue. He wrote with verve, but without restraint; and if he taught the common man to read newspapers, he also spoilt his taste in style.

One would expect Biography to flourish in an earnest age like this. But there was little of it, and that little rather undistinguished. Two autobiographies, however, stand out by their naturalness—one by Mrs Ramabai Ranade, who in a self-effacing vein provides an intimate portrait of her illustrious husband, M. G. Ranade, and the other by Dr D. K. Karve, recording his struggles in the work he did for women's education.

1920-1945: Poetry

The nineteen-twenties appear to be a period of enervation. The socio-political legatees of Lokmanya Tilak soon shrivelled into dim-eyed obscurantists; the social reformers were inclined to take comfort in petty changes. Superficial compromises were worked out, leaving the deeper conflicts unsolved. It was the age of the small man. Out of his small dreams was fashioned the romance of the age; his paltry complaints struck half-tragic poses. He would simplify everything, make tidy divisions and put neat labels on them. The form marked you out; the content was taken for granted. A little technical ingenuity and prettiness of phrasing carried a writer far with the critic and, therefore, with the naive reader.

This, of course, was not true of all. The better writer and the better critic resisted these decadent ways. The resistance gathered strength, and in the thirties expressed itself, among other ways, in a search for new themes and new forms. The depression of the late twenties, the rise of the Labour Movement and, most of all, the national struggle of 1930-31 led by Gandhiji, shook down complacent barriers and stirred a new awareness—at least in a few. The middle-class had been and was the principal producer and consumer of literature. It had fought the great controversies; it had patched up compromises and relaxed into sloth. A conventional puritanism did duty for the genuine urges of the spirit, and served as a salve for the conscience. A section of the middle-class, however small, now responded to the

changing environment. The disillusion of post-War literature, the New Drama, and the 'progressive' poets of the thirties in England, also made a deep impression on this minority, which sought to rescue literature from the prevailing degeneracy. The process of rescue has continued to this day with uneven effect, partly because of uncertain direction.

In poetry, the twenties were dominated by *Ravikiran Mandal*, a group of poets, who set out to reclaim poetry for every-day life from the extravagances into which, following Govindagraj, it had lost itself. They did it so conscientiously that they fell into the opposite error of making it too common. Their distrust of intensity and abandon went well with the temper of a society which would hedge everything, including its arts, within a narrow respectability. Their poetry achieved wide currency, largely through recitals given by the poets; it had often a plain moral stamped on it, if it also bore, on the obverse, a faint reformism. Love, for example, deserved some concessions according to them, so that it might blossom into a domestic virtue! It would, of course, blossom better in the purer air of the countryside. That set off a general conceit of pastoralism for some time, in fiction as well as in poetry. The fashion of 'singing' a poem—which, later, with the Tambe school taking the lead, went into sorry excesses—encouraged a concern for inessential elements like word-music and mere craftsmanship. But the *Mandal's* keen interest in the formal and technical aspects of poetry induced considerable, if rather cautious, experimentation, and did a great deal to secure a much needed variety. Of the group, 'Yeshwant'—Y. D. Pendharkar—had the widest appeal. In his poems bewailing little frustrations and irritations, the common reader found an echo of his own troubles. 'Gireesh'—S. K. Kanetkar—practised smooth generalizations on trivial themes. 'Madhav-Julian'—M. T. Patwardhan (1894-1939)—who started with love-lyrics with an engagingly outlandish flavour (partly derived from Persian ghazals), soon cooled down into a traditionalist and a pedant, and proceeded to redeem those poems to a purity of diction, and even of sentiment!

P. K. Atre's *Zenduchi Phule* (1925), which has been deservedly popular all these years, had deft parodies of the mannerisms of these poets, but its undiscerning admirer, missing the point, was provoked to laugh at all poetry. The early thirties were plagued by mediocre parodists of mediocre poets. They only served to

create a frivolous attitude to poetry, which smothered some poets and drove others to fawning upon the reader with honeyed verse.

The poetry of Tambe—some of the best of which was written in the twenties—set the fashion of the thirties. Under its spell, poets spun out pretty lyrics of adolescent sentiment—whatever their own age. The style had to be exuberant, howsoever thin the content. The singer found these lyrics useful and carried them to large audiences. The sensitive and subtle in Tambe escaped most of his imitators ; what they managed was a voluptuous and jingling style and an affectedly naive imagery. Poetry drugged you into a delicious make-believe, isolated from life. The cliches were of diction as well as of emotion, and response to them called forth no intellectual effort from the reader. This softened the poet, too, and arrested normal development. That was the tragedy of some young poets of the generation, whose early promise was never fulfilled. Critical convention has fixed upon B. B. Borkar as the best disciple of Tambe. He is much more than that. He brought an individual rapture of sensual imagery and a fine sensitivity to the beauty of nature—particularly of Goa, from which he hails—to the heritage of Tambe. If Borkar had not added an incongruous second string—that of moral idealism—to his poetic bow, and concentrated on what was native to his genius, he would have achieved greater distinction.

In more or less conscious reaction against the *Ravikiran Mandal* and the Tambe School was produced some of the best poetry of the period. Anant Kanekar almost discarded poetry after his slender collection *Chandrat* (1933), but it provided the wide-awake reader with a brief glimpse of new directions. It offered a curious medley: moonlight and the factory-chimney and parody. Probably a tentative and transitional newness. 'Anil'—A. R. Deshpande—has achieved a more precise and purposeful newness in his long and dynamic poetical career from the self-centred delicacy of his early love-lyrics—*Phulwat* (1932)—through the cultural homily in *Bhagnamoorti* (1940), to the fusion of thought and feeling in *Pertevha* (1947). He founded and propagated free verse to liberate poetry from the stiffness and the obsession with the mechanical which conventional verse-forms had brought. N. G. Deshpande with his pure lyricism and a genuine pastoral element, and G. H. Deshpande with his metaphysical paradoxes expressed in a terse diction straining to recapture the flavour of

the Saint-poets, provided relief from the inanities of the prevailing modes.

The impact of the 1942 Movement on literature quickened its deliverance at least from some of the quackery which had prevailed. 'Kusumagraj'—V. V. Shirwadkar—rode the popular surge to phenomenal fame with his *Vishakha* (1942). His great literary talents could have sustained him in the eminence, but other forms drew on them, leaving his poetry in relative neglect. Kusumagraj could not, probably, recapture the fire of his anti-imperialist poems, his native strain being that of a nostalgia for quiet beauty. His success seemed to set, however, an effervescent blood-and-tears mode, which exploited itself to quick exhaustion, but not before it had also spilt into prose. But the spirit of defiance it implied was good for a poetry impatient with its many shackles; Manmohan's, for example—though he is nobody's disciple! Some young poets, who had started earlier, responded to the changing climate and matured quietly within their limits.

Drama

Past glory sustained the theatre of the twenties; the popularity of a few actors—most of them better singers than actors—was regarded as a continuation of the glory. Some of the finest musicians of the time—including composers and accompanyists—performed for the stage, drawing to it many non-Marathi patrons to whom, of course, the music was the thing; but so it was to a large number of Marathi patrons, too! When by the early thirties, the film, with the sound-track newly added to it, entered as a rival purveyor of music and entertainment generally, the stage threw up its feeble hands and slumped into a sorry heap. It had been tottering in any case. The film merely posed as a vanquisher!

The minor dramatists of the twenties—some of whom achieved a short-lived fame—catered to the popular taste with undistinguished variations on the old formulae for stage-success. The heroes and villains of history and mythology and the Saint-poets obliged as useful material. But all the heroes had a family likeness; so had the villains. Of the major dramatists treated in the previous section, Khadilkar and Kolhatkar declined with the stage; Kelkar's other interests crowded out the dramatist in him. Mama Warerkar, whose first play was staged in 1907, now came into his own. Warerkar's career sums up a great part of the evolution

of the modern Marathi stage. Starting with mythological plays, this restless experimenter in theme and technique used the stage, according to his lights, for the interpretation of social problems. The natural, if a trifle too blunt and unshaded, speech of his characters exposed the unreality of much that had passed for dramatic dialogue. Warerkar has written about forty plays and recent ones like *Apoorva Bangal* (1953) and *Bhoomikanya Seeta* (1955) assure us that such powers as he had are still undiminished. The stage should be grateful to him for endowing it with realism and, generally, for widening its reach.

The bravest effort to keep the stage alive came from 'Natyamanwantar', an earnest group, inspired by the New Drama of Europe. Their first play, and only success, *Andhalyachi Shala* (1933), was adapted from Björnson, the Norwegian, by S. V. Vartak. It was ably mounted, but its appeal was restricted, the common playgoer probably resisting the alien flavour about the play. The group disintegrated soon, but not before it had disseminated in the better playgoers its yearning for a revitalization of the stage with truly modern drama. An abortive attempt to meet the challenge of the film with short plays was made by some naive and stagnated writers. The odd blend of the old-fashioned production technique of the 'Balmohan Company' and the semi-modern plays of P. K. Atre proved a commercial success. After a characteristic burlesque, in which delightfully comic characters were strung on a slender story, Atre plumped for melodrama, and was an even better hit. When a humorist of his brilliance writes a melodrama, its solemnities come precariously near parody! With these successes, Atre reeled into farce and a tragic dissipation of his rare powers of humour, characterization and style. By the end of the decade, however, he had drifted away into film and journalism and the stage collapsed once again. It was revived in the early forties by a former journalist drifting into drama—M. G. Rangnekar. Rangnekar's 'Natyaniketan' set out with the modest aim of providing entertainment and fulfilled it admirably with his elegant drawing-room comedies. A fair likeness to middle-class life, lively dialogue and a few songs constituted a typical Rangnekar comedy, and the mixture went well with the listless audiences. The amateur stage of these years, leaning far too much on adaptations from the West, was anaemic and unnatural.

NOVEL

With the decline of the professional theatre, the novel stepped in as the principal mode of entertainment for the middle class. When, later, the film came up as a strong rival, the puritan found it a more exciting target. But the novel achieved more than respectability and popularity; it achieved a wide variety and, in the hands of a few writers, a noble purposefulness. V. M. Joshi (1882-1943) fulfilled the promise of *Ragini* with five more novels, the best of which, *Sushilecha Dev* (1930), is a profound study of the evolution of an educated woman's intellectual outlook. Another, *Indu Kale ani Sarala Bhole* (1935) presents the conflict between art and morality as it impinges on the lives of some individuals. A faint smile of scepticism hovers around the philosophic detachment of Joshi's social analyses. There is little detachment in the novels of Dr S. V. Ketkar (1884-1937) who, defying all accepted canons of form and style, made novels out of the most unpromising material and improbable plots. Dr Ketkar was a sociologist, and he used the novel to work out his problems. He shocked the common reader with his clumsiness and the better one with the contradictions within him. But he brought to the novel an intellectual boldness. Between him and Joshi, the novel suddenly arrived at a dignity which served to expose the pettiness of the popular fiction of those years. Mama Warerkar has been even more prolific in the novel than in drama, having written one hundred and fifteen novels so far ! Twenty-eight of these are detective novels, and of the rest fifty-eight are translations from Bengali. These translations, specially those from Sarat Chandra Chatterji, have consummate ease. Most of his original novels deal with the underdog. His underdogs are, however, anything but meek, and his women are a little too uniformly aggressive. But they provide a refreshing contrast to the sentimental pictures of the poor and of the fair sex in much of the fiction of the age.

The twin celebrities of the years after 1926 were N. S. Phadke and V. S. Khandekar—novelists first, and short story writers, essayists and critics afterwards in the eyes of their adoring readers. The over-simplifying critic, taking the cue from the writers themselves, identified Phadke with the creed of 'Art for Art's Sake', and Khandekar with 'Art for Life's Sake', as the respective labels went. Phadke's sleek novels provided clever varia-

tions on his central formula of simplified love for the upper middle class. An immaculate craftsman, Phadke unfolded his plot effectively; and his style was so dainty that ever since he rose to fame there has been an unhealthy emphasis on style in critics as well as in writers. To Phadke the style was a part of his craft, and he made a mystery of neither. He explained it all, honestly and lucidly, in his How-to-Write manuals. Khandekar entered the scene slightly later than Phadke—after making a reputation in the short story—and challenged Phadke's formula with his own, in which idealism was a strong ingredient. His young people were very earnest about social and political service. They spoke eloquently about it; they fell in love incidentally. The earnestness thrilled the reader and suddenly made him aware of a deficiency in the hedonistic Phadke, who promptly tried to cover it by making his young people meet not in a drawing room but at a political meeting. The two writers have remained apart; but not so their admirers. Curious though it may seem, simultaneous raputre was possible (or was it alternate ?)—the one a complement to or an escape from the other. Both continue to write to this day in many forms, Phadke being the more prolific of the two. But their modes have palled on the reader, particularly Phadke's. G. T. Madkholkar's novels had politics laid on rather thick, but they did not quite assimilate it, and it looked yet another embellishment like his flushed style. In P. Y. Deshpande, politics was at the core, but it was smothered by extravagances of emotion and style. If Vishram Bedekar's only novel, *Ranangan* (1939), with its significant relation between the worsening international situation and the lives of its principal characters, had not been passed over as lightly as it was, there would have been less of the pseudo-political fiction of the following years. If past history was romanticized by the previous generation of writers, the history of the present was romanticized by some of these novelists, and most readers lapped it up as realism and politics !

But a section of readers and critics, even if in a minority, kept up its resistance to the fashionable fiction of the day. This stimulated some writers to break away from the fashion and explore new ways. The emergence of women as writers—in their own right—has considerable significance. 'Vibhavari Shirurkar'—whose identification with Mrs Malati Bedekar is no more guarded

as a secret—created a sensation with her stories and two novels (1933-35), for they revealed the intimate truth of the woes of the awakened woman as no one had done before. Mrs Geeta Sane wrote as boldly, but not as effectively. Not in this spirit of challenge and with far more subtlety did 'Krishnabai' —Mrs Muktabai Dixit—and Mrs Kamalabai Tilak, write their stories of the middle-class home. Mrs Kusumawati Deshpande's sensitive sketches—with the poetic and the critical finely balanced—evoked warm response. Of course, other women-writers continued to write of women in the dear old way of chivalrous men. Of the men who deviated from the accepted path, R. V. Dighe stands out prominently with his action-packed novels about the aborigines in the Sahyadri, though he, too, threw over them the veil of romance. The didactic-sentimental novels and stories of Sane Guruji (1899-1950) cast a remarkable spell on teen-agers—particularly after 1942. It served to draw at least some of them away from the crude detective fiction which flourished during those years.

Short Story

The short story, which as a distinct form came into being during this period—the stories of H. N. Apte, S. K. Kolhatkar, N. C. Kelkar, V. S. Gurjar and others of the earlier period being either bald narratives or abbreviated novels—developed on similar lines as the novel. Unity of structure and psychological analysis give to Diwakar Krishna's *Samadhi and Six More Stories* (1923) the distinction of being the first collection of modern short stories. With Khandekar and Phadke bringing their particular excellences to it, the form settled down by the end of the decade. The thirties brought a great variety of modes, at least some of which were in conscious reaction against Phadke and Khandekar. Y. G. Joshi, scoffing at the unreality of the two popular writers, made a bid for popularity with his sentimental stories about home-life. V. V. Bokil started promisingly with stories which even through their exggerated drollery gave brief glimpses of the pitiable lower middle-class young man—spineless and muddle-headed; but lacking restraint and variety, Bokil soon overdid the drollery—in the novel, too—and undid his better powers. The controlled irony of some of Anant Kanekar's stories was lost on most readers, but the author himself did not work it up. A corrective to the got-up sweetness of the popular

stories of rustic life was supplied by the robust stories of S. M. Mate, among others. The 'regional' story was uncertainly attempted by a few. The natural beauty of Goa and its old-world life drew some writers, most of whom used them as a convenient background for stories of moral license. Humorists like C. V. Joshi, P. K. Atre and Shamrao Oak used the short story skilfully, sometimes as a vehicle for literary satire.

The Personal Essay and other Prose

The personal essay, more directly derived from English than most forms, settled down quickly in the late twenties, Phadke and Khandekar once again being the twin makers of its success with the reader. Phadke's were fragile, if dapper, pieces; Khandekar's carried their embellishments, including the sentimental ones, less neatly. Phadke, of course, explained how it was done, and everyone thought he could do it. Except N. M. Sant hardly anyone did it well. Anant Kanekar's essays offered comments on life by turning accepted maxims upside down in a casually debunking spirit. The manner was easy to imitate; Kanekar himself imitated it too often, but not too long, for he gave up the form soon. Far more difficult to imitate was Mrs Kusumawati Deshpande, for she had no recognizable mannerisms, and her delicacy and poetic feeling were genuinely personal. The popular success of the form and its decline with exhaustion of its little tricks reflect the temper of the age.

Biography should have drawn strength from this activity and experimentation in the various forms. It did not; it continued to be stodgy. But there was one glorious autobiography—*Smritichitre* (1934-36) of Mrs Laxmibai Tilak, wife of the poet N. W. Tilak. The lady hardly knew her alphabet, let alone orthography! Though the trivial occupied so many writers of the age, a few gave of their best to serious prose. V. M. Joshi, Dr Ketkar, S. M. Mate, V. D. Savarkar (whose poetry, too, was written with a sense of mission) and S. D. Javadekar were some of the more prominent of these writers. Journalism, on the whole, made its compromise with the common taste, and the better type of periodical found it hard. Excessive simplification and diluting of complex theories for popular consumption are, probably, a fatal temptation to the clever journalist. Kelkar fell for it. So did Phadke, without being a journalist. This was

characteristic of the age. There was also considerable critical activity, though much of it was frittered away on puerile exposition of 'technique' and the mechanical side of 'form'. Some more was frittered away on making a rehash of Sanskrit poetics. A section of the literary camp which drew its sustenance from the West was magnetized by the Marxist school. This, inevitably, set off a lively controversy and induced some re-thinking.

1945-55

Towards the end of the previous period a growing impatience against its literary modes could be sensed. The 1942 Movement, the Second World War and the political flux in its wake culminating in the advent of freedom, provide a significant background to the emergence of a 'new' attitude to literature. The make-believes that had hedged in literature in sheltered isolation from common life got a rude shaking. The sorry patchwork of our un-integrated lives broke through the finery which had covered it up. The pose could not hold. The forms which were revitalized most by the new attitude were poetry and the short story. They now seek to explore life in all its variety, in its most obscure recesses. The veils that gave a dull uniformity to experience are ripped off.

The new Poetry seeks to awaken the reader and draw him out to feel the fine edge of the poet's experience. There are no rapid generalizations, the content being intensely personal. Thought and feeling are fused. Form falls into its place and is no obsession with the poet. The imagery is precise ; it springs from living experience. Science yields its telling metaphors. Nothing which is of the truth of life is alien to the poet. Sex, for example, its sordidness as much as its beauty, is unfolded. The sub-conscious throws up its uninhibited associations. The obscurity which the sluggish or blunted reader finds in this poetry is in the nature of the experience out of which it is made. As for language, the New Poetry prefers the directness of living speech to the affectations of 'poetic diction'.

With B. S. Mardhekar's (1907-1956) *Kahi Kavita* (1947), the full impact of the New Poetry was felt for the first time, though P. S. Rege's earlier work had anticipated some of its peculiar features. Mardhekar's is the poetry of a deeply sensitive man, gnawed at his vitals by the frustrations of a bleak life. But it does not wail ; it has a private dream of beauty and the hope of its

fulfilment. Mardhekar's imagery is more intellectual than sensuous, unlike Rege's whose poetry captures the flitting moments of private excitement in their warm detail, the world of men and things being shut out, except in so far as the poet's experience is enriched by it. Both Mardhekar and Rege use a condensed expression, chary of the superfluous ; the poet does not annotate his poems. Sharatchandra Muktiboth and Vinda Karandikar would in their rapture give words a little more rein—and their images more room to grow—particularly in their socially agitative poems. So would Mangesh Padgaonkar, whose apprentice days in the luscious mode of Borkar and Tambe still linger in his style. Vasant Bapat, too, evolved into the new way, but without doing violence to his poetic nature. Mrs Indira Sant's evolution was achieved even more smoothly, for her undemonstrative lyricism had always spurned the inessential. Y. D. Bhave, after a short spell of somewhat self-conscious poetry in the new way, lapsed into silence. Each of these poets has brought his individual strain to the New Poetry, and between them they have brought great variety and richness to it. The public readings given by some of them have helped in breaking at least some of the barriers the orthodox critic and the merely scurrilous put up between the common man and the poetry of the day. This new climate has animated a large number of young men and women into authentic poetry. Of the older poets, 'Anil' has responded to the climate with more openness than most, but few have remained completely untouched by it. Not that there is a general hegira from the old to the new. Much of the shimmering beauty of G. D. Madgulkar's lyrics has its roots in the diction and imagery of the traditional poetry of the people—of the Saint-poetry and the folk-songs ; but the perfect harmony between form and content, and the vitality of imagery in his better lyrics lift him high above those who are merely derivative. But the solemn debate between the old and the new sounds empty when poems like *Bahinaichee Ganee* (1952) move you with the weather-beaten wisdom of an inspired peasant woman—Mrs Bahinabai Choudhary.

The kinship between the new poetry and the new short story is brought out best by the stories of Gangadhar Gadgil, the boldest experimenter in the form. Gadgil's eccentric imagery reaches out for the recesses of experience and reveals unsuspected contradic-

tions. We are shown up ; the little illusions we have hugged for comfort are wrenched away. Arvind Gokhale relates the tensions within the individual to his environment. Bhave would concentrate more on the individual, but his point of reference is outside both individual and society ; it is traditional morality. The compelling truth of Vyankatesh Madgulkar's stories of villagers has utterly exposed the idylls which make angels out of them, as also the sentimental pictures which sought to make them pitiable. The villagers live in his pages in their own right as men ; he hangs no facile theory by them. These four writers are deservedly regarded as the architects of the New Short Story, which in their hands has achieved great depth and variety. D. B. Mokashi and Shantaram have also contributed to it. There is little action in these stories, usually ; it is what lies behind action that makes a story. After the initial resistance—inevitable with so much that was new—the reader responded to this story with growing keenness. As in poetry, a large number of young writers were drawn to the form, the full potentialities of which were thus discovered, each one struggling, in the new-found freedom, to strike out his particular path. Ranjit Desai and D.M. Mirasdar, like Madgulkar, confine themselves to villagers. Sadanand Rege's whimsical note is like Gadgil's, and yet his own. The older type of short story, of course, persists, and some of the work done in it is valuable. Mahadeoshastri Joshi's stories about Goa—probably in an understandable reaction against the use of the region by the popular story for irregular love—are sentimental about the simple god-fearing people of the region; their earnestness wins the reader. N. G. Goray's sketches—many of them about the people of Konkan—are sentimental in a less obvious fashion and their literary quality is distinguished.

The novel, curiously enough, has not prospered as well as the short story. The unreality, the sentimentalism and the obsession with elegance of form of the novel of pre-War years still seem to obstruct the efforts of some writers to lift the novel to an adult level. There are exceptions, however, the brightest of them being S. N. Pendse, whose four novels represent a remarkable growth of powers. These novels are about a comparatively obscure region in Konkan. Pendse has captured the conflicts that lie below the surface of the languid life of that region. They give a dramatic quality to his novels. His characters have the vitality to sustain

the drama. S. R. Biwalkar's first novel *Suneeta* (1948)—about the woes of East Bengal at the partition—held out great promise, but his second and last novel did not fulfil it. Vibhawari Shirurkar's (Mrs Malati Bedekar) *Balee* is a realistic picture of an unusual sector—a criminal tribes settlement. The novels of V. V. Shirwadkar (the poet Kusumagraj) carry an uneasy mixture of the new and old—a new social context and an old leaning towards the romantic. The same could be said of another poet, B. B. Borkar, whose novels are about Goa. B. S. Mardhekar did not do as well in the novel as in poetry; but he enjoys the distinction of being the first novelist to attempt the 'Stream of Consciousness' method. Vasant Kanetkar also tried the method, but with even less success. G. N. Dandekar, a prolific writer, continued, as it were, from where Sane Guruji left—and his uneven work hovers around the line which demarcates the sentimental from the genuinely emotional. Of the older writers, Phadke turns out novels regularly in illustration of his technique and can still boast of a considerable following.

The theatre is not doing well, either. There is much amateur activity in the bigger towns, which gathers up and spends most of its strength on drama-festivals. The earnest amateur longs for 'modern' plays, but they are not so easily available. What little there is of the professional stage is content with stale tricks of entertainment, but they do not seem to be able to keep it steady on its legs. The proletarian part of Bombay has had continuous stage activity; but, isolated from the classes which have been 'literary' by privilege, its plays have most of the sins of the old drama, without many of its qualities. Besides Mama Warerkar's, there are few names to which any distinction or hope could be attached. Nana Jog has used the drama effectively for the interpretation of social problems. So has Mrs Muktabai Dixit, but the scope of her problems is probably not as wide. Vyankatesh Vakil's dramatic gifts, particularly in dialogue, languish for want of stage-production. The same could be said of all these, and many others besides. Two recent discoveries of the amateur stage are C. Y. Marathe—who promises to revive the 'historical' play—and Vijay Tendulkar, a writer of great talents, irony being one of them. One of the greatest successes of these years is P. L. Deshpande's *Amaldar*, a sparkling adaptation of Gogol's *Government Inspector*. There are many other writers who have made

adaptations from European drama, one of the most prominent of them being Anant Kanekar. There is genuine love for drama, but, with the insuperable difficulties in the way of the growth of a healthy theatre, it is often exploited by those looking for easy profit—or fame!

Little need be said about the other forms. The personal essay, ruined by the technique-mongers of the last generation, has not revived. However, a different kind of essay—not ostentatiously personal and informal, but with a subtle personal flavour and serious in content—has been done extremely well by Mrs Irawati Karve and Miss Durga Bhagwat. R. B. Joshi's travel-sketches have the true essay quality in them. Humour need not be treated as a separate branch, for it is found in the various forms in solution—notably in the New Short Story. But P. L. Deshpande's satirical sketches and burlesques need special mention. In literary criticism, the work of B. S. Mardhekar got down to the fundamentals of art in a way none had done before, and it raised controversies. But these, and other controversies—a lively one being about the the relation between the Artist and Society—have produced much serious writing and an earnest re-assessment of accepted positions and criteria. Amongst those who have given a wholesome direction to the urge for re-assessment are critics like Mrs Kusumawati Deshpande, W. L. Kulkarni and D. K. Bedekar. The plane on which these controversies have been fought promises well for the future of literary studies.

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ORIA LITERATURE

MAYADHAR MANSINHA

The Language and the People

Oria, the language of the Orissa State on the south-eastern border of the Indian Republic, is spoken by about fifteen million people. There are also hundreds of thousands of Oria-speaking people outside the political boundaries of the Orissa State. Oria is the language of a people who, as the Kalingas, the Utkals, and the Odras of ancient times, had achieved great military and maritime glories, their empires having sprawled for centuries right from the banks of the Ganga to the banks of the Godavari. They once had flourishing overseas colonies and empires such as that of the famous Sailodbhavas, touching many points of south-east Asia.

But while colonies and empires have vanished, as they generaally do, and the old Kalinga has shrunk into the small-size Orissa State in the Indian Republic today, the Orias have still in possession a grand empire of superb art and architecture, the priceless heirloom left to their decadent and down-trodden posterity by those ancient, virile builders of empires and edifices, the Kalingas and the Utkals. The building urge of the Orias lasted for a millennium, starting with the Jain monastic caves of Khandagiri-Udaygiri of the second century B.C. to the exquisite and gigantic dream in stone that is Konarka of the thirteenth century A.D. It is remarkable that literary art developed only when, due to circumstances which have not yet been thoroughly sifted, opportunities for national expression through plastic and constructional arts ceased to be available for the Orias.

Though the Assamese, the Bengali and the Oria pundits all claim *Baudhagan O Doha* of the eighth and ninth centuries A.D. as the earliest literary expression in their respective languages, Oria as is spoken and written today, in close parallel to the sister languages of Bengal and Assam, became articulate in about the fourteenth century.

In the five hundred years from the fourteenth to the last lap of the nineteenth century when the modern period begins, the development of and the output in Oria literature have been more

or less on the same lines as in most other modern Indian literatures, with local variations only in technique and character. The character of the literature on the whole is a mixture of the sacred and the secular, the sacred exercising unimaginable hypnotic inhibitions on the writers who never dared venture for materials beyond the three concentric circles of the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Bhagavata Purana*. But within these narrow horizons great and ever-lasting works have been produced. The output in this limited field is enormous. Not to speak of the large numbers of lyrics, ballads, Kavyas and Puranas, there are at least a dozen varieties of the *Ramayana* and four versions of the *Mahabharata* in Oria.

Modern Period

The modern period, however, is a complete break-away from this medieval world with its mythological atmosphere. The contact of the West has helped to re-form the vision and the outlook of the people and has given them an entirely new sense of values. This has created a modern, virile literature with wide spheres of approach and sensibilities absolutely unknown to the old masters.

But the contact, because of sad historic conditions, came to Orissa rather late and in circumstances most unfavourable to the people. If Oria is comparatively backward in respect of, say, the sister and neighbour language Bengali, the reason is not that the language and the people are inherently inferior but that the opportunities which made Bengal prosperous under British rule in many directions were not available to the Orias for at least a century.

It is only for the last twenty years that the Orias have had a State of their own. For four centuries from the day Orissa lost her independence in the last quarter of the sixteenth century to only ten years before the British left India when she became a sort of homogeneous State again, Orissa and the Orias lay dismembered in four different provinces, a down-trodden and ruthlessly exploited minority in each. In the hundred years after the Battle of Plassey, while Bengal had already had a University of her own, not to speak of English schools and colleges, and her literature had come to a high level of development beside which Oria or Assamese had nothing to show, Orissa could not even boast of a full-fledged high school. And if in spite of this the language and

literature of the people have not only survived but developed, it was chiefly because the spearhead of the Oria resistance against forces of exploitation was an extraordinarily able and clever man who became the father of modern Oria literature, Fakirmohan Senapati.

Fakirmohan Senapati (1843-1918), true to his family name, became the real 'general' of modern Oria literature and nationalism. He was a unique man in many respects. He had only three or four years of formal education to his credit and started life as an assistant to his uncle who was supervising the repair of sails at the quayside of the old port of Balasore, his home-town, in the good old days of sailing ships. From this, through sheer mental brilliance and hard labour, he rose to be Dewan of several Orissa States. He was well-versed in at least five languages, with a working knowledge of English, and was pioneer printer, publisher and journalist in Orissa and that too on co-operative lines. He translated single-handed both the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* from the original into modern Oria (though there were many versions already of both the epics in the language) and after trying his hand at short stories (the first to be written in Oria), ballads, hymns, narrative poems, rollicking satires and an epic on the Buddha, he produced in retired life half a dozen first-class novels, which still remain unrivalled for their racy language, their love of the soil, their deep vibrating realism, their humour and for the high moral tone that pervades them all.

Fakirmohan is still unknown beyond Orissa. But I have heard from many a non-Oria I.A.S. officer in Orissa (for whose study in Oria one or two of Fakirmohan's novels are a 'must', because of their genuine folk-speech) that as a novelist Senapati is really remarkable in modern Indian letters and as a writer of the people he was far ahead of many others in the field. When the celebrated Bankim Chandra of Bengal was writing in highly Sanskritized prose of Nawabs, Begums, Chieftains and Princesses and of the newly founded upper middle class of Bengal, this unknown novelist of Orissa was concerned with simple uneducated weavers, barbers and peasants, the village choukidar who himself was an accomplice of the dacoits, the unscrupulous and mischief-mongering maidservants in the city and the country, the avaricious clerks under the English magistrates, the bluffing lawyers, and the young sons of ancient families who, intoxicated with the

first draught of English education, plunged themselves and their parents into tragic confusion. That Fakirmohan had no formal education in English was a blessing in disguise. He was essentially a man of the people. Their homely, vigorous language, with the unmistakable smell of the village street, the paddy fields and the tanks where the village women take their daily bath with the daily dose of gossip, came natural to him. He used it with masterly effect in his short stories and novels, giving it literary dignity and grace such as would not have been thought possible if he had not demonstrated it.

Fakirmohan's novels and short stories present a gallery of living men and women who are unsurpassed for their realism and vitality and have in them that divine spark, given only by great masters of literature to their creations, which not only make them live for ever but seem more living than living men and women. As having created a truly national picture gallery, representing almost all levels of Oria society, he often reminds me of the great Cervantes and his *Don Quixote* in which great classic the entire Spanish nation is said to have been vividly and artistically reflected.

His novel *Chhamana Athaguntha*[1] (Six Acres and Eight Decimals) is the story of the victimization of a childless, simple weaver-couple by the rapacity of a village sahukar or money-lender. Senapati's rural realism is the deepest in this book which was first serialled in the monthly magazine *Utkal Sahitya*. The descriptions of the investigation and trial of the murder case in this novel were so vivid that people from distant country places actually came to Cuttack to see the parties, supposed to be real persons, with their own eyes at the trial.

This book anticipates Prem Chand's *Godan* in fundamentals, though not in actual facts, by about fifty years. Senapati's *Lachhama* is a historic novel, describing the depredations of the Burgis or Maratha raiders in Bengal and Orissa. His *Mamoo* (Maternal Uncle) and *Prayaschitta* (Expiation) are novels showing the disintegration of the old social structure as a result of the impact of European culture, confronting the youth with a conflict of values. Both these novels may also be regarded as epics of Redemption and Resurrection, from the way the erring

[1]This novel has been selected by the Sahitya Akademi for translation into other Indian languages.—*Ed.*

characters, after vicissitudes of experience, have been brought back to new visions of rectitude of conduct and the right way of life.

The fact that in addition to being a great creative writer, Fakirmohan in his early youth was the spearhead of the resistance against the Bengali cultural and linguistic dominance and helped to revive his mother tongue, has naturally secured for him a unique place in Oria literature.

Radhanath and Madhusudan

Fakirmohan was, however, not an isolated phenomenon, but was the brilliant leader of a gifted group of writers dedicated to the revitalization of the old Oria language and its heritage. The two others who with Fakirmohan made a grand literary trio are Radhanath Roy and Madhusudan Rao, both poets of high order. Taking Man, Nature and God as their main motifs respectively, Fakirmohan, Radhanath and Madhusudan practically created a new self-contained and self-sufficient literature in an ancient language. In the total creation of these three, who socially were on intimate terms with one another, there were all the elements for a full-grown literature.

While Fakirmohan unrolled before the nation the unsuspected drama of human passions that went on below the quiet social surfaces in the town and the country, Madhusudan (1853-1912) sang in grand lines, of God, of a pure life and the beatific union of the human soul with the Universal. He saw God everywhere, from the sublime snow-capped altitudes of the Himalayas to the humdrum occurrences of daily life. He did not pretend to any literary glory and never attempted anything voluminous. His work consists of a large number of songs, lyrics, ballads, odes and sonnets, all of which breathe the air of a higher life. Some of these, such as a dozen or so of his sonnets, his odes to the River[2], the Firmament[3] and the Sound[4], and his two lyrical-narrative poems, 'Sunrise on the Himalayas'[5] and 'The Descent of the Divine on to the Soul of a Sage'[6] would be priceless treasures in any literature. His hymns are sung every evening by thousands of school children

[2]Nadee Prati
[3]Akash Prati
[4]Dhwani
[5]Himachale Udayosihhaba
[6]Rishi Prane' Devavatarana

in Orissa in all the school hostels. His poems continue to be a strong and living moral and spiritual force in the literature, if not in the national life, of Orissa.

Radhanath (1848-1908), a true poet and aesthete, supplemented in poetry what Senapati did in prose, in creating a true national literature for the Orias—a literature of the soil, expressed with a beauty and elegance unknown before. Radhanath ushered in a new age in Oria poetry in two very vital directions. Firstly, he freed Oria verse from the verbal gymnastics which had become an indispensable part of poetry under the seductive influence of Upendra Bhanja and his school, from the medieval times. Retaining a judicious proportion of alliterations and with a careful choice of diction, Radhanath made his verse as pleasing in the simpler garb as that of any old master. For the first time also he introduced in his verse a deep respect for the close relation between *sabda* and *artha*—perspicacity and precision of terms and aptness of epithets in which he emulated, I think, his master Kalidasa.

But besides the revolution he brought about in the medium of poetry in Oria, Radhanath's most vital contribution of modern Oria literature and the national life of Orissa, is the motifs he used in his works. He in a sense Hellenized the entire landscape of Orissa. He took for his themes semi-historic legends from Orissan history or from Latin or Greek mythology suitably metamorphosed for an Orissan background, and treated the Orissan landscape as the theatre for his heroes and heroines. For four centuries before him the Oria poets, with the exception of Sarala Das and Balaram Das, had sung only of the Ganga, Yamuna and the Mount Govardhana, etc. of northern India which perhaps none of them had ever seen. They had no eye for Orissa's beautiful landscape at their door-steps. The broad and noble rivers, Mahanadi, Brahmani and Baitarani, the picturesque hills of Malayagiri, Meghasan, Mahendra and others had remained unsung. For the first time Orissa's beautiful landscape found devoted admirer and singer in Radhanath who described it in all its aspects with lyrical rapture. He wrote a long lyrical narrative on the lake Chilika—Orissa's lake of beauty and wealth. It is like a grand hymn to Nature written in magically fluent and mellifluous couplets, describing the various beauties and aspects of the lake in such intimate manner as to make her appear like

a living being, interspersed with touching reflections on conditions in contemporary Orissa of those dismembered days and also of life in general. For this reason Radhanath's *Chilika*[7] has become a landmark in Oria literature.

Like the Chilika lake, there is not a single celebrated mountain, river, landscape, historic monument or a popular god or goddess in Orissa, that has not been immortalized in Radhanath's vivid verse. As a matter of fact several places, like the Chilika lake itself, have got their present-day celebrity through his poetry. As a poet of Nature, Radhanath has done for Orissa what Kalidasa did for India as a whole. As the Greeks did in respect of the Hellenic world, Radhanath peopled the whole of Orissa with living gods and goddesses who took intense interest in human affairs and endowed the mute but beauteous Nature with human personalities. He made Orissa, in short, a land of superb poetic beauty, a theatre for supernatural beings, a land of myths and legends, of handsome fighting heroes and lovely heroines. The historic stone embankment on which the present citizen of Cuttack takes his evening stroll and the hills he sees on the other side of the river Kathjuri, have had the magic baptism of poetry through the pen of Radhanath. Almost anywhere a sensitive, educated Oria moves in his land, a few lines of Radhanath's poetry would naturally come to his lips, aptly revealing the essence of that particular spot.

Essentially Radhanath was an epic poet. He wrote few lyrics. His work consists mainly of Kavyas, with themes as described above, and not tapped before. The semi-historic themes, the simple, elegant, and pleasing narrative, the patriotic local background and sentiments, as also the philosophic reflections on life, all these make Radhanath's Kavyas unique in Oria poetry and are deservedly treated with respect as the usherer of a new age in Oria literature.

The most ambitious of his Kavyas, his *magnum opus* as it were, is his epic *Mahayatra* (The Great Journey), in dignified, sonorous and picturesque blank verse. The poet planned to complete it in twenty-one cantos but he died before he finished only seven. But even in this unfinished condition it is a grand creation. Through the *Mahabharata* story of the last journey of the Pandavas to

[7]This poem has been selected by the Sahitya Akademi for translation into other Indian languages.—*Ed.*

Heaven after the Battle of Kurukshetra, the poet had the idea of covering the destiny of India through all the vicissitudes of foreign conquests with a direction for the future. He makes the Pandavas come to Puri where they meet Agni, the Fire-god, who guides them through the primeval forests of Orissa and Central India on to the tops of Sahyadri—the Western Ghats. And there Agni unfolds before them the panorama of Indian history and what would happen to the glorious Aryans in their own land due to demoralization under the influence of the imminent Kaliyuga. The poet brings his story up to the tragic defeat of Prithviraj at the hands of Muhamad Ghori. The description of the wars and of Nature are of epic grandeur and the stirring patriotic speech of the Hindu general on the eve of the last battle is unforgettable.

THE SUCCESSORS

Radhanath, Fakirmohan and Madhusudan had each a host of followers. Limitations of space make it impossible to discuss all or even some of them, though a brief mention is necessary of at least two of them, one for the originality of his slender contribution, and the other for the extraordinary brilliance of his poetic workmanship.

Nandakishore Bal, while writing much in imitation of Radhanath and Mudhusudan, sang of the Orissa village and brought folk-rhymes and folk-traditions into the sphere of modern lyrics. His *Palli-chitra* (Picture of a Village) generates deep nostalgic feelings in the heart of every Oria for that quiet, picturesque, self-contained, pious, rural existence that is lost beyond recovery due to the impact of the modern civilization. His *Nana Baya-gita* (Many Crazy Rhymes) remains the most important collection of child-verses in Oria so far.

Gangadhar Meher, the poor weaver poet of Sambalpur, is remarkable for his brilliant craftsmanship as a poet. His range of studies was small, being poorly educated. But he brought to the old mythological subjects a new magic and flavour, a new music in the lines, a new finesse in the rhymes, a new vision and realism in the characters, that was not seen or heard before in Orissa. Like the world-famous textiles of Sambalpur, which he was trained to produce for a living by heredity, Meher treated poetry as a living, colourful and picturesque art. Each of his Kavyas is like a scroll of Chinese painting, vital with feelings, colours and

situations. His field was limited, but within those small boundaries he created small paradises. A very large number of his couplets and quatrains have gone into common parlance and his versification has remained the norm of the finest poetic art in Oria so far. Of all the Oria poets, past and present, his rhymings are the most perfect and the most musical. His Sita in his famous Kavya *Tapaswini* is a superb creation in feminine ideal.

The Satyabadi School

Although the camp-followers of Radhanath and Madhusudan carried on their traditions well into the third decade of this century, their influence as a literary force practically ended in the first decade, yielding imperceptibly to a new generation of intellectuals.

In 1903, exactly one hundred years after the British occupation of Orissa, the Utkal Sammilani was formed on whose platform the princes and people of Orissa of all ranks rubbed shoulders in a united demand for unification of the Oria-speaking tracts that lay scattered in four different provinces. This was the earliest demand in India for a homogeneous linguistic State. From 1903 to the end of the First World War and the advent of Gandhiji and his Non-co-operation Movement, this was the deepest dream and the most active aspiration of the Orias. This national passion found effective expression in one of the noblest souls of modern India, Pandit Gopabandhu Das (1877-1928), whose poetry, prose and oratory swayed the masses of Orissa as never before or since. His words sounded like coming out of the inmost heart of the whole people. He founded a Vihar, a garden-school, at Sakhigopal near Puri, where highly educated scholars like Pandits Nilakantha Das, Godavaris Misra and Kripasindhu Misra worked on small pittances, forgoing lucrative jobs under the alien masters which they could have got for the asking. This school was for about twelve years the cultural centre of Orissa. The entire staff, under the inspiring leadership of Pandit Gopabandhu, was devoted to reconstructing the nation through education and literature. Essentially, however, it was a revivalist movement, harking people back to Vedic culture, the ideal of simple living and high thinking, and of turning each individual life into a continuous sacrifice in the service of the Nation and of humanity as propounded in the *Gita*. But except in the life of the great

leader Gopabandhu Das, these ideals were seen little in practice. So, as a moral force in the national life, this institution left no mark at all. Its lasting memorial lies in the little bunch of good literature that it produced in its short existence. In the pages of the monthly *Satyabadi* (Truthful) and in the columns of the weekly *Samaj* (The Community) that he founded, Gopabandhu poured out his passionate feelings, aspirations and soulful benedictions in a style of prose that for dignity, chastity, and elegance of expression, nobility of thought and a genuine poetic flavour, remains unrivalled in Oria so far. His 'Soliloquy of a Prisoner' is popular in Orissa like folk-poetry.

Pandit Nilakantha Das, closest of Gopabandhu's followers, preached the Brahminic ideal in his *Arya Jeeban* (Aryan Life) in the befittingly recondite style of a Pandit. He also wrote a virile and wildly beautiful Kavya on Konarka, prefaced by a scintillating and thought-provoking resumé of Orissa's history through the dreams of the students of the Satyabadi Vihar whom he had taken there for an educational trip. Pandit Das, after travelling long in the barren wilds of politics, has returned to the creative world of literature and has recently given to Oria literature a path-breaking socio-literary history of Oria people in his voluminous prose work named *Odia Shahityara Kramaparinam* (Gradual Development of Oria Literature)—acclaimed as a masterpiece by the general reader. Pandit Kripasindhu Misra of the same school, produced first class historical literature in his two books *Konarka* and *Barabati*. And Pandit Godavaris Misra wrote stirring patriotic plays and poems and matchless ballads. All told, this is the finest little bunch of literary achievement collectively produced so far in Orissa. Whatever be the reasons for the disappearance of the Satybadi School, it created a void in the national life of Orissa not to be filled up again. During its short span of life it was to Orissa what Santiniketan has been to Bengal.

Drama and Theatre

During these years the drama was slowly building itself not only as a respectable branch of literature but also as part of the national life in Orissa. It was born out of patriotism, as an answer to the challenge of Bengali plays staged by the Bengali societies in Orissa. Ramasankar Roy, Kamapala Misra, Vikaricharan Patnaik and Gobinda Surdeo gradually made the theatre a strong

and respected influence in the country, making the stage not only a place for amusement, but also a pulpit for social reform and a platform for national regeneration. While Bengali playwrights had to search the annals of Rajastan and Maharashtra for materials of their historical plays, their Orissa counterparts found adequate material in the heroes of Orissa history, the heroic kings Kharavela, Kapilendra, Purushottam and Anangabhima under whose banners the Orias had once conquered and ruled empires. This was naturally a favourite sentiment for a long-dismembered race like the Orias.

During the same period Baishnav Pani revolutionized the village drama in the whole of rural Orissa by modernizing 'yatras', making them reflect contemporary conditions and bringing them closer to a formal stage-play while retaining their charming operatic quality. What this talented man has accomplished single-handed in Orissa's villages may well be a unique record in the whole of modern India.

GANDHI: TAGORE AND THE 'GREENS'

By this time the Gandhi cyclone had swept the country. Pandit Gopabandhu and his band of workers plunged into the national resistance movement and Orissa lost the only cultural centre then existing. With the Satyabadi group thus out of the picture, a group of undergraduates at Cuttack came out with some new literary haberdashery with Bengal trademarks. At that time Tagore was at the peak of his fame and popularity. It is true that his influence is irresistible; but those young men let themselves be swept off their feet. Nor did they bring anything really valuable from that great storehouse of wisdom and poetry that is Tagore. They only tried to imitate a few of his sensational non-essential externals such as the rhyme-schemes, the apparent lack of logic and consistency and a little obscurantism that we sometimes meet in Tagore's poetry. They styled themselves as *Sabujas* or 'Greens', imitating the same nomenclature which Tagore and Pramatha Chowdhury had coined and publicized in Bengal at one time as a counterblast to the old and the orthodox in Bengal society. And like the Bengali *Sabuja-patra*, they too had a mouth-piece of their own in *Yuga Bina* (The Lyre of the Times).

The group was a sensation in Orissa's literary world for about five or six years on account of the novel wares they served,

although everybody knew that they were mostly imported stuff, without roots in the soil of Orissa. They set up their own publishing firm also. But the group vanished as suddenly as it had risen. In a surprisingly short time, the Greens started turning yellow.

The Greens, nevertheless, left a deep influence on the younger generation for at least two decades. They made the Tagore rhyme-schemes stay in Oria literature, along with the indigenous ones. Many poems of Annadasankar Ray and Baikunthanath Patnaik written in those early days are accepted by all critics as welcome additions to the treasure-house of the Oria language. In these poems we do indeed enter a new world of magic in word-music, of new visions of love, beauty and life, and of new imageries, apart from newfangled rhythmic expressions which sounded strange and outlandish to the ears of the cultured Orias, attuned to the poetic rhythms of the long line of poets from Sarala Das to Gangadhar Meher and Nilakantha Das and others whose creations were indigenous products of the soil, true to the idiom of the language and the soul of the people. The novel, *Basanti*, collectively written by the group was once a sensation and had some influence on young novelists coming up soon after. Kalindicharan Panigrahi's novel *Matira Manisha*[8] (Man of the Soil) written in heyday of the group and many of his stories have been widely and deservedly popular. Kalindicharan now stands celebrated all over Orissa as a publicist on the current problems and specially as a prose stylist.

The People's Poets

Close on the heels of the Greens came the Socialists and the Communists by about the mid-thirties. They brought with them Freud, Walt Whitman, and Karl Marx. Though Orissa was and still is a predominantly agricultural State and till yesterday her only industry was a few rice-mills, these harbingers of the New Age wrote fiery, violent poems on class-war. All unknown to himself, the poor rickshaw-puller of the dirty, dusty streets of Cuttack became the hero of innumerable short stories. Those who did not fall in line were pooh-poohed as mediaevalists or lotus-eaters. But to speak the plain truth, this cry for class-war was just a passing international fashion. And not to speak of 'the people,'

[8]Selected by Sahitya Akademi for translation into other Indian languages. —*Ed.*

most of the Marxist jargon of these self-styled 'People's Poets is unintelligible even to educated intellectuals.

Among the host of leftist writers, however, a few names of unquestioned talent shine out. But their place in Oria poetry is assured, not because of the partisan preachings, but for the genuine touches of human feeling and social realism which they have left. Sachi Routray's *Palli-Sree* has been deservedly popular in Orissa and some of his short stories and poems, reflecting the frustration of modern life, are likely to enjoy a lasting place in literature. Some of the poems of Ananta Patnaik, and some songs of Monmohan Misra charged with emotion, have also moved many hearts, irrespective of political leanings.

But although by now the leftist ideology has become the common fare for literatures, the aggressive battle-cry is no longer audible. Now shadows of Eliots and Ezra Pounds seem to walk the stage. We come across month after month or week after week, just common prose deliberately made incoherent and illogical and cut into verse-form and paraded as 'Progressive Poetry'. Why this pretence of verse-tradition is so studiously maintained at all is difficult to understand.

There are writers, however, who for the last thirty years or so, through the rise and fall of successive literary sensations, are courageously resisting any political affiliation, right or left, criticizing what is wrong and praising what is right irrespective of personalities, and have been patiently devoting themselves to literary culture as such. To this devoted group belongs Radhamohan Gadnayak, who is celebrated in Orissa for his poems of beauty and love and heroic anecdotes in faultless rhymes and also for his deep study of old literature and the art and science of metres. Dr. Kunjabihari Das of Santiniketan also deserves praise for his unalloyed devotion to literature. At present he is engaged in the monumental work of collecting the folk-poetry of Orissa.

But, on the whole, the market for poetry has been on the decline, with the exception of one or two poets. The last decade in Orissa has been one predominantly of novels and plays which deserve a word more.

Fiction, Drama and Prose

After Fakirmohan there was a long void in novels in Orissa. Though one or two did keep on coming every year, they were

not particularly remarkable. The next phase in fictional literature was marked by the 'Greens'. But it was mostly confined to two nevels. In the last ten years or so, however, there has been a flow-tide of fiction in Oria literature, with the rise of the Mahantis, brothers Gopinath and Kahnucharan, Chandra Moni Das and Nityananda Mahapatra, and others. The cheap thrillers apart, we do find a serious purpose in the novels of Kahnucharan, Gopinath and Nityananda. Gopinath[9] has gone to Adivasis for exploring new fields, while Kahnu, his elder brother, is busy with social problems. Both turned out to be quite prolific in production.

The Theatre

After the formation of Orissa as a separate State, the stage received an impetus to establish itself as a permanent feature in the flourishing urban life of Cuttack. Now there are four live and thriving theatres in Orissa and the playwrights are finding their profession lucrative. Plays are in as great demand as novels. The tradition of the Oria drama has been kept unbroken by Aswini Kumar Ghosh and Kalicharan Patnaik from the point where Pandit Godavaris Misra and Gobind Surdeo left it. The days of mythological and historical plays are over. Now the social play rules the stage.

Prose

Prose in general may be considered to be fairly highly developed in Oria, thanks to the novels of Ramasankar, Fakirmohan and their successors, to the essays of Ratnakar Pati, Bipin Bihari Roy, Pandit Nilakantha Das, and Sashibhushan Roy (son of Radhanath Roy), and to the biting satires of Gopal Chandra Praharaj and the poetry-charged essays and addresses of Pandit Gopabandhu Das. The great lack of scientific content in old and medieval literature is also being rapidly filled up along with other critical studies. Authoritative history of Oria literature that was started in the beginning of this century in a tiny tract by Tarinicharan Rath, has subsequently appeared in ever-increasing bulky volumes by Pandits Binayak Misra and Suryanarayan Das, supplemented by

[9]His novel on tribal life, *Amritar Santan* was awarded the Sahitya Akademi prize in 1955 and a Hindi translation of it has been published on behalf of the Sahitya Akademi by Bharati Bhandar, Allahabad.

two fat volumes of socio-literary studies from the pen of Pandit Nilakantha Das (*Odia Sahityar Kramaparinam*). Recently there has been a spate of books on individual poets like Fakirmohan and Gangadhar Meher. Pandit Gopinath Nava Sarma's monumental work on Oria linguistic study (*Odia Bhasha Tatwa*) in the beginning of the present century has been supplemented also by the scholarly labours of Pandit Binayak Misra (History of Odia language) and Girijasankar Roy and Golakbihari Dhal. Among about a dozen dictionaries, big and small, the etymological Oria Dictionary (*Odia Sabda-Tatwa-bodha Abhidhan*) by Pandit Gopinath Nanda Sarma and the enormous seven-volume quadrilingual dictionary (*Purnachandra Odia Bhashakosh*) by Shri Gopalchandra Praharaj, published at a cost of about one and a half lakh, stand out pre-eminent. After publication of four or five popular compendious Cyclopaedias trying to serve the reading public with all sorts of necessary and interesting knowledge, a real start has recently been made for compiling an 'Encyclopaedia Utkalensis' on respectable academic lines, now being taken over by the Utkal University for completion.

The appetite of the reading public in Orissa for literature of knowledge is now so steady and reliable that private publishers are bringing out on the market large volumes of world-history, fat books on all aspects of agriculture, and such critical publications as those on nuclear explosion and didactics of the Vijnyan Prachar Samiti—a fine body of young scientists in Orissa trying to popularize science in the Oria language. Gokulananda Mahapatra and Dr. B. K. Behura deserve particular praise in this as yet untried field of popularizing sciences. A tribute of praise is also due to the young and enterprising publisher Praphullakumar Das of Monmohan Press, who has taken up the excellent responsibility of translating the prize-books of all Nobel laureates into Oria. Some of his translations, such as that of 'Independent People' by Halldor Laxness of Iceland are presumed, I think with justification, to be the first to be translated into any language in the whole of Asia or India as the matter may be. The young lecturer Vaidyanath Misra deserves praise also for having taken up almost as a mission, writing books and articles in the press on democracy, parliamentary system of government and socio-political studies with a view to educating the Orissa intelligensia on correct lines in these vital aspects of our national life. Books on medicine,

psychology, logic, cattle and poultry-keeping, etc. are steadily getting into the market. Oria may be possessing one of the most authoritative books on elephants in any Indian language, still lying scattered in the pages of the *Utkal Sahitya.* A Dictionary of terminology covering all technical and scientific subjects is already published in parts, compiled by a Committee headed by Dr. Artavallabha Mohanty under the auspices of the Government of Orissa. Children's literature is also making quite appreciable progress, though heavy investment in this line is definitely a snag. *Sishu-Sankhali*, or Treasure of the Children, published by the Saraswata Press is an excellent Encyclopaedia for children, though as yet incomplete.

Orissa had some notable women writers in old and medieval times and we have them in modern times too. Of them two deserve special mention for their undoubted talent. The late Dr. Kuntala Kumari Sabat who lived and died at Delhi was a sensation in her time as a poet, novelist and patriot. At present another talented woman writer is Smt. Bidyutprobha Devi, whose lyrics are outstanding for their natural flow, faultless rhymes and vivid imageries.

Things on the whole are brighter than they were before the formation of Orissa as a province. Till our undergraduate days right up to the thirties of this century, Orissa was content with only one or two weekly papers. Now there are five dailies running, one of them in English. Book trade is flourishing and rapidly expanding. Orissa has every reason to look forward with hope and confidence to a bright future, not only on account of her vast potential reserves of natural resources but on account of her high tradition in the field of art and culture, which is growing and expressing itself in new forms.

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PUNJABI LITERATURE

KHUSHWANT SINGH

PUNJABI is spoken by more than 20 million Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs living in India and Pakistan. Its literary heritage therefore comprises of writings of people of three different faiths using three different scripts—Arabic, Devanagari and Gurmukhi. Its literary heritage has consequently been enriched by the incorporation of concepts current in writings of other languages employing these scripts, e.g. Arabic, Persian, Urdu and the many off-shoots of Sanskrit. This spicy potpourri is further flavoured by many dialects which give Punjabi its peculiar robustness and masculine vigour.

It is not easy to fix dates of any language, particularly one whose ancestry is as varied as that of Punjabi. Some scholars take it back to the 12th century, some place it even earlier. In the absence of authentic records it is safer to begin with the identified writers whose work now forms a part of our literature and influences centemporary writers. Of these there are two main groups, the Muslim Sufis and the Sikh Gurus, both starting from the 15th century. The two streams mingled at a fairly early date and became as it were the parents of the language.

THE SUFIS

Although the Sufis followed closely on the Muslim invasions of India, their impact on Indian life and letters had to await their learning the language and customs of the people. By the time they did that, their religious ardour had been considerably cooled and they were willing to accept and even revere faiths other than their own. Sufi headquarters in the Punjab were at Pakpattan near Multan and their impact on religious thought was more pronounced in this region. The Sikh Gurus, particularly the founder Guru Nanak, studied them with as much reverence as they did the saints of the Bhakti movement.

The Sufis looked upon the relationship between God and man as that between a lover and his sweetheart separated by Maya or illusion. Separation could only be overcome by an intense longing and loving. This was the constant theme in

most of their writing as expressed by Bulhey Shah in this popular verse :

Love hath ever a new spring.
I am tired of the words of the Vedas,
Of the learning of the Koran.
I am tired of prayer. Obeisance
Hath bruised my forehead.
I found not God in Hindu holy places
Nor on pilgrimage to Mecca.
Only he that hath found love finds Light.

This theme recurs in the writings of the Sikh Gurus and is also the motif behind the three great epics of the Punjab, *Heer Ranjha*, *Sassi-Punnoo* and *Sohnu Mahiwal*. In all of them, after a lifetime of separation and longing, lovers meet in death. Echoes of this abound in the poems of the greatest living contemporary writer, Bhai Vir Singh.

The Sufis lived in villages and their vocabulary remained refreshingly rustic. The day-to-day activities of peasants—ploughing, weaving, churning of butter-milk, the cross-currents of their joint family homes consisting of a large number of relations with the loves of sisters for their brothers and tensions with their wives, the tyranny of the mothers-in-law and the girls' longing for the paternal home, etc. gave them all the similes and metaphors they needed. The Sikh Gurus, particularly Guru Nanak, made much use of these familiar pastimes and situations to convey his message.

Another notable contribution of the Sufis to Punjabi writing was the popularization of certain forms of verse which became distinctive in its literature, e.g. the Kafi, Bara-Mah and the Siharfi. Kafi was well known to Persian poets and is popular today in Urdu verse. The Bara-Mah or the twelve months gave poets full liberty to describe the beauty of the seasons and string along anything else they wanted to say. Some of the richest descriptions of nature in Punjabi poetry owe their origin to the practice of composing Bara-Mahs. Warris Shah has a delightful one in his *Heer-Ranjha* and that of Guru Nanak incorporated in the *Adi Granth* is probably the most beautiful of all in the language. (It is a pity that contemporary writers have abandoned this practice.) The Siharfi or the acrostic, where a verse starts off with a letter of the alphabet as its cue, is perhaps a form unique to Punjabi. This

form, although it was used by the Sikh Gurus, was abandoned soon after them and never revived.

THE SIKH GURUS

Most of the Sikh Gurus were given to versification and the writings of Nanak, Angad, Amar Das, Ram Das, Arjun, and Tegh Bahadur are preserved in the *Granth Sahib*. The two outstanding contributors to the Sikh scriptures are the first Guru Nanak and the fifth Guru Arjun.

Guru Nanak (1469-1539) preached through his poetry, and consequently his works have a didacticism explaining his philosophy of life and exhorting others to a particular way of living. Most didactic poetry suffers from a cramping narrowness imposed by the purpose for which it is written, but Guru Nanak's poetry displays a remarkable freedom of expression. The beauty of pastoral Punjab—the ripening cornfields, the break of dawn and the awakening of birds, the graceful flight of deer in the woodlands, the majesty of monsoon clouds and the music of rainfall—all aroused him to religious and poetic frenzy. The commonplace was for him pregnant with symbolism of moral significance.

As a team of oxen are we driven
By the ploughman, our teacher.
By the furrows made are thus writ
Our actions—on the earth, our paper.
The sweat of labour is as beads
Falling by the ploughman as seeds sown.
We reap according to our measure,
Some for ourselves to keep, some others give.
O Nanak, this is the way to truly live.

The best known work of Guru Nanak is the *Jup Sahib*, the morning prayer. The following verse is typical of the religious fervour which imbues most of his writing:

Were I given a hundred thousand tongues instead of one,
And the hundred thousand multiplied twenty-fold,
A hundred thousand times would I say, and say again,
The Lord of all the worlds is one.
That is the path that leads,
These the steps that mount,

Ascend thus to the Lord's mansion
And with Him be joined in unison.
The sound of the songs of heaven thrills
The like of us who crawl, but desire to fly.
O Nanak, His grace alone it is that fulfils,
The rest mere prattle, and a lie.

Guru Arjun (1563-1606) expresses the same deep sentiments in his poetry as Guru Nanak. His verse abounds with jewelled phrases and has a haunting melody produced by the use of alliteration and repetition of words. *Sukhmani* is Guru Arjun's most popular composition and he is undoubtedly the most sung of all poets of the language.

The *Granth* is the greatest work of Punjabi literature. Most of the labour involved in its compilation was done by Guru Arjun and a contemporary writer, Bhai Gurdas. It is a voluminous book containing many thousand verses. Besides the writings of the six Gurus mentioned, it has selections from several poet-saints associated with the Bhakti movement. The language does not, however, always correspond to that known in the region of its origin.

Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708) was perhaps the most erudite of all the Sikh Gurus and was familiar with both Hindu mythology and Islamic theology. He was a patron of art and letters, and had fifty-two poets in his own court. He wrote in Sanskrit, Persian and Punjabi. Unlike his predecessors, he did not restrict himself to expressing the glory of God in his verses. Guru Gobind Singh's writings have a moral as well as a political significance. The martial spirit which he infused amongst his followers is expressed in the vigorous poetry of his famous *Zafarnama*—Epistle of Victory, addressed to Emperor Aurangzeb. His *Jup Sahib* is to this day a source of inspiration to his followers. Guru Gobind Singh's works were compiled and edited by his contemporary, Mani Singh.

An example of the vigour of Gobind Singh's composition is the following:

Eternal God, Thou art our shield,
The dagger, knife, the sword we wield.
To us protector there is given
The timeless, deathless, Lord of Heaven,

To us all-steel's unvanquished might,
To us all-time's resistless flight,
But chiefly Thou, protector brave,
All-steel, wilt Thine own servant save.

After the passing of the ten Gurus a spate of literature was produced on the lives of the Gurus by their contemporaries and others who were able to glean information on the subject. These biographies are known as 'Janam Sakhis' and are valuable historical records. The better known historians of the period were Seva Ram, Ram Koer, Santokh Singh Ratan, Singh Bhangu and Gyan Singh.

No literature was produced by the Sikhs during their struggle for power nor during the brief period of Sikh rule when more store was set on Persian than on Punjabi. But while they were busy conquering and consolidating their kingdom, two Muslims, Bulhey Shah (1680-1758) and Warris Shah (1735-1798), wrote verse which is the finest example of romantic and mystic Punjabi poetry. Bulhey Shah's Kafis and Warris Shah's epic *Heer Ranjha* are most popular and are recited and sung in every village in the province. They have also influenced subsequent generations of Punjabi writers.

Contemporary Punjabi Writing

For nearly half a century following British occupation there was little literature produced in India. It took many years to recover from the effects of the political change and in sizing up western values. Early English rulers were convinced that all oriental culture was worthless and the best thing that the Indians could do was to adopt the European. One generation of Indians agreed with this opinion and anglicised themselves till they lost all contact with Indian tradition and learning. The next generation discovered the folly and proceeded to blow away the dust of the archives housing the achievements of ancient India. This process took place all over the country. Since the Punjab was the last to be subjected to these western complexes, it was the last to shake off their effect. The renaissance in Punjabi writing was consequently somewhat later in time than in the rest of the country.

Post-annexation Punjabi writing corresponded roughly to the

social and political changes produced by the Singh Sabha movement followed by the Akali and the Communist. In each case, the literary output bore the impress of the problem which faced the protagonists of these movements. There were, however, some writers who remained oblivious to social and political problems and wrote, as it were, for the sake of writing.

Singh Sabha Writers

The literary output of the Singh Sabha movement is the most important part of its contribution to Sikhism. The person to whom it owes most is Bhai Vir Singh, the man who re-created interest in Punjabi and is a landmark in the history of the language. Vir Singh (born 1872) has in 84 years of his life produced more than perhaps any other Indian writer, dead or living. His works would certainly take as much room as the 24 volumes of the Encyclopaedia Britannica—and he has not stopped writing. He has written fiction, poetry, and commentaries on the sacred texts.

Vir Singh's writing has to be viewed with reference to the social and political conditions at the end of the nineteenth century, when he started writing. His novels which made his name known in millions of homes were written at a time when the Punjabis were beginning to doubt the achievements of their ancestors. English historians harped on the crude and corrupt Sikh rule, which they had replaced by an 'enlightened' one. Sanskrit scholars belittled the religion of the Sikhs as a poor imitation of the Vedic and ridiculed its forms and symbols as barbarous. Vir Singh's novels, *Sundari*, *Vijay Singh*, *Satwant Kaur* and *Baba Naudh Singh* had as their central theme the heroism and chivalry of the Sikhs and the ethical excellence of their religion. This was set in contrast to the servility of the masses and the oppression of the Pathan and Mughal rulers. The Sikhs devoured Vir Singh's novels with enthusiasm and gratitude. But with the passing of that peculiar mental state, the novels lost their appeal. To the present-day reader, they appear somewhat insipid. Their place is not in literature but in history.

Vir Singh himself gave up writing fiction and took to translating and explaining the scriptures in a series of pamphlets, and in his weekly paper, the *Khalsa Samachar*. Along with these appeared his poems which gave him the most honoured place among Punjabi poets.

Vir Singh first experimented in blank verse. A long poem, *Rana Surat Singh*, was published in 1905. The theme, as usual, was religion. His technique and mastery over the language was impressive. No one had successfully written blank verse in Punjabi before; Vir Singh turned out a work of sustained excellence where alliteration and onomatopoeia, rhythm and repetition, produced a lilting melody with all the languor and sensuousness of a summer afternoon. Thereafter Vir Singh wrote the lives of two Sikh Gurus, the founder Nanak and the last Guru Gobind Singh. *Kalgidhar Chamatkar*, the life of Guru Gobind, appeared first and was followed three years later by *Guru Nanak Chamatkar*.

In between these biographies, Vir Singh published several collections of verse employing a short metre hitherto not used by Punjabi poets. The most popular of these were in the form of rubayat (familiar to the readers of Omar Khayyam). In these he expressed his philosophy and mysticism, where the love of God and of human beings, the spiritual and the sensual, moral and divine, moved in a colourful kaleidoscope, beautiful and baffling. There was always an underlying sense of humility, at times almost masochistic :

Thou didst pluck and tear me from the branch,
Held me, breathed the fragrance,
And—cast me away.
Thus discarded, trodden underfoot and mingled with the dust,
All I remember—and with gratitude,
Is the memory of the touch.

And again—in one of his most quoted verses :

In a dream you came to me,
I leapt to hold you in my embrace,
It was but fantasy I could not hold.
And my arms ached with longing.
Then I rushed to clasp your feet
To lay my head thereon.
Even these I could not reach
For you were high and I was low.

In another verse Vir Singh expressed his belief in the superiority of faith over reason :

I made my mind a beggar's bowl.
I begged the bread of learning door to door ;

With crumbs that fell from houses of learning
Did I cram it.
It was heavy,
I was proud,
I was a Pandit.
I strove to walk in the clouds,
But even on the earth I stumbled.
One day I went to my Guru
And placed the bowl before him as an offering.
'Dirt,' he said, 'dirt.'
And turned it upside down.
He threw my crumbs away,
Scrubbed the bowl with sand,
Rinsed it with water,
Cleansed it of the filth of learning.

Most people's creative years are over by the time they reach sixty. Not so Vir Singh's. He never belonged to the school of fiery poets who are consumed in the flames of their own making. The life he leads and the poetry he writes is, as it always has been in the puritanical tradition—chaste in language, clean in thought, warm in expression—and inevitably, long-lived. It was fitting that his *Merey Saiyan Jio* should have been honoured with the highest literary award[1] in the country and at least the name of Vir Singh made known to people other than those who speak Punjabi. The crying need now is that of a competent translator.

Four contemporaries of Bhai Vir Singh who are now dead deserve mention; Kahan Singh for compiling the best known Encyclopaedia on Sikhism; Charan Singh, the editor of *Mauji* for introducing humour in Punjabi prose and poetry; Puran Singh for some excellent writing in blank verse in an unconventional style and on unfamiliar themes; and Dhani Ram 'Chatrik' whose reputation while he lived was second only to Vir Singh's own. His collections of verse, particularly *Chandan Vari*, *Kesar Kiari*, *Nawan Jahan* and *Sufi Khana* have some beautiful lyricism full of Punjabi colloquialism.

Even amongst the younger generation, poetry remains the most popular form of literary expression. Hardly a month goes

[1]Sahitya Akademi Award for the most outstanding book published in Punjabi since Independence.—*Ed.*

by without the emergence of a new poet. Newspapers and magazines devote a large part of their space to poems and a Punjabi Kavi darbar will still draw a larger crowd than a political or a religious meeting. Most of this new poetry is, however, of indifferent quality. Two exceptions to the rule of mediocrity are Mohan Singh and Amrita Pritam. Mohan Singh, editor of the monthly magazine *Punj Darya,* made a promising start with his *Savey Patr, Kusumbra* and *Adhavatay.* He came to be justifiably recognized as the best of the younger poets. His later works—particularly *Kuch Such*—published after partition, showed a strong left-wing bias, where political emotion was given precedence over poetical form—a malaise which has afflicted a large number of younger writers who label themselves 'progressive'. In the case of Mohan Singh, the first flush of Marxism soon settled down to simple championing of the underdog and an exhortation to activity. He was once more able to recapture the spontaneous beauty of his earlier writing and if the standard of ouput continues, he may well become one of the greatest poets in the language—for many summers lie before him. In a recent and unnoticed ghazal he expresses his 'revolutionary' sentiment:

The pitch-black within the pitcher has burst
Spilling the milk-white of the moonlight;
'Tis time we talked of a new dawn
And gave up the gossiping of the night.

I grant that autumn's touch
Hath robbed some leaves of their sap.
Sorrow not for what is lost and gone
With hope anew fill thy lap.

How long on the ancient vault of heaven
Idle fantasies draw and hold them dear?
Come let us caress the earth's tresses
Come let us talk of something near.

Amrita Pritam is now the rage of *litterateurs* in both the Punjabs —the Pakistani and the Indian. She is not a 'progressive', nor has she a message to impart. She writes poetry for no other reason except that she must. She is not erudite, but her poems have a naiveté and charm of simplicity which more than compensate for the absence of thought-content. There is a soft refrain

of the folk-lore and ballad in most of her writings. Sometimes the love for the jewelled phrase, the lilt of words carries her off the tangent and the central theme gets confused. In one poem—one of her own favourites—the lover addresses his sweetheart:

Awake, my love !
Thy eyes are heavy with dreams,
Dreams of days gone by,
When breezes were with odours woven.
(Does that make thee sigh?)
Out of black of the moonless night
Let a myriad stars thy tresses light.

The poem which has spread Amrita Pritam's conquest across the Pakistan border is addressed to Warris Shah, who has understandably become symbolic of the good old days long before partition when Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims lived happily as brothers. Her poem is a lament on the partition of the province and massacres that followed in its wake. She asks Warris Shah to rise from his grave to see the havoc wrought in his homeland :

O comforter of the sorrowing, rise and see thy Punjab,
Its fields are strewn with corpses, blood runs in the Chenab.
Our five rivers are poisoned by the same hand
That uses the poisoned water to irrigate the land.

Popularity has come Amrita's way somewhat easily and she frequently seeks the applause at the cost of quality. (The opening lines of most of her poems are usually the best; thereafter there is a sad tapering off.) But she is young and with a great future before her. The Punjab has great expectations from her.

As in other languages so in Punjabi there are modern trends in poetry which make a fetish of defying form, metre, rhyme and become too obscure for the ordinary reader. Much of this brand of writing dies out after its days are done: only the little that is good remains. One example of the little that deserves to stay are the poems of the lawyer Pritam Singh Safeer. Even he has been silent for quite some time now.

Let us turn to prose. The outstanding figure in Punjabi prose writing is Gurbaksh Singh. Gurbaksh Singh started life as an engineer and his studies took him to the United States. After his return he abandoned engineering for a mission to propagate

modernism. He started putting across his ideas through a monthly magazine, *Preet Lari.* He set up a community centre known as Preet Nagar which is now on the Indo-Pakistan border. Preet Nagar became the centre of much academic activity. Gurbaksh Singh's book of essays, *Sanvin Padhri Zindgi,* established him as the best essayist and writer of Punjabi prose. He is also the inspiration behind many writers with socialist tendencies, including his own son, Navtej Singh. Both father and son have been in China, Eastern Europe and Soviet Russia attending 'Peace' conferences. Although much of their writing is avowedly propagandist, it is undeniably of good calibre, having been enriched by experience of the world outside and reflecting modern trends in foreign literature.

Punjabi novel has produced very little of any significance. Many novels have been written and continue to appear every month. Even Bhai Vir Singh whose mastery over verse is of such a high order was unable to reproduce anyone of the essential ingredients of a novel and the younger writers like Duggal have contented themselves with long short stories or a series of short stories with the same characters, trusting that would pass for a novel. The best known Punjabi novelist is Nanak Singh who has written nearly forty novels of which *Chitta Lahoo* and *Adam Khor* are perhaps the two best; the latter is being translated into other Indian languages under the auspices of the Sahitya Akademi. Nanak Singh is much concerned with spreading a message of social reform through his writings. His stories can be absorbing but his language is marred by introduction of English words when perfectly good Punjabi ones are available. Two younger writers who may make good if they continue to improve are Surinder Singh Narula and Jaswant Singh 'Kanwal'. The latter's *Puranmashi* is full of promise.

One department of creative writing in which Punjabi writers have achieved significant success is the art of short story writing. The general tone of short stories which appear in Punjabi magazines is high. This is due to the fact that the pioneer in the field, Sant Singh Sekhon, followed the technique of European and American short story writers. The straightforward narrative was abandoned and dextrous use was made of allusion, under-statement, situation, psychology and suggestion. Kartar Singh Duggal—the leading writer of short stories—took

his cue from Sekhon. Duggal's forte is his knowledge of the dialect of Rawalpindi district which he uses with remarkable effect. He has published over a hundred short stories, of which 'Sver Sar' and 'Nawan Ghar' are noteworthy. He has also written novels dealing with the partition troubles—but these are, as already stated, collections of short stories strung together. His *Naunh Tey Mas* will remain a landmark in Punjabi fiction for some years to come. It has masterly portrayal of peasant character and a skilful handling of a theme where a pastoral peace rapidly moves to a tragic climax of communal massacres. It is refreshingly free from communal bias. The same standard of objectivity is retained in a later work, *Larai Nahin*. Duggal's forays into poetry writing are not as well-known—and for good reason. His plays have never been put on the stage, but several have been broadcast—certainly more than those of any other Punjabi playwright.

Another successful short story writer is Kulwant Singh Virk. What Duggal has achieved through the dialect of northern Punjab, Virk has with the dialect spoken in and around Lahore. Although Duggal's influence on his work is noticeable, Virk's subjects and characters come down from a more virile part of the province and his writing is consequently more masculine and devoid of sloppy sentimentality.

The most neglected part of Punjabi writing is the drama. That is for the simple reason that no organized stage exists and all that a playwright can hope is to have his plays read, or at the most broadcast. Neither one nor the other does full justice to dramatic art—nor really do amateur actors picked up at random from schools and colleges. Nevertheless, Prof. I. C. Nanda's comedies achieved laughter through a certain amount of slapstick and verbal jugglery. They still remain the talk of Punjabi *litterateurs*. Feeble attempts to put across new plays are regularly made. Gurdial Singh Khosla has tried to specialize in plays for children and manages to raise actors from nursery schools. Balwant Gargi, who is a better known dramatist, has for a long time been associated with the leftist cause and has only recently returned from a long trip studying the stage in the U.S.S.R. and Europe. His own plays are impassioned and with a sense of political purpose, his satire has a point and his humour a sourness which serves his message well. His use of dialect spoken in

Patiala lends his plays a robustness which goes well with his pastoral themes. It is a pity that Gargi's plays should have to be read to be appreciated because those that are put on the stage are by political groups and few are free of bias to go on the radio. He has now launched out on novel writing as well.

Future Prospects

It is a strange phenomenon that most Sikh political leaders have tried at one time or the other to write or versify. (Gurmukh Singh 'Musafir', President of the Provincial Congress Party, is a poet of considerable talent. Master Tara Singh has written some novels in the wild-west tradition, only substituting Bill Cody and Davy Crockett by Sikh characters; and, believe it or not, Sohan Singh Josh, the Communist leader, was a well-known exponent of the Scriptures.) This happy emphasis on literary prowess was probably one of the factors behind the united demand for official recognition of Punjabi, the setting up of a Punjabi speaking zone and a Punjabi Akademi. Now that all these have come about, one may ask, what are the prospects ?

Official recognitions do not produce literature. To some extent the linguistic loss sustained by partition and the recognition of Urdu in Pakistan and the patronage of Hindi in India will be compensated. But for some years to come the literary output of Punjabi will depend on Sikh writers using only Gurmukhi script. It will also lose some of its rustic vigour with the disappearance of dialects and the use of a more standardized diction in the Punjabi speaking zone. These restrictive influences will have to be combated by producing translations of classics of other languages and giving them precedence over second-rate stuff which, because it is initially in Punjabi, becomes text-books in schools and colleges. It reduces the standard of literature and gives sustenance to unimaginative writing. Punjabis who, for lack of adequate returns, have taken to writing in other languages, will have to be induced to return to their mother-tongue (e.g. Rajinder Singh Bedi, whose short stories in Urdu are absolutely first-rate). Punjabi magazines must be liberated from the cramping effect of having to cater largely for students taking examinations. A few excellent ones exist apart from those already mentioned. The Pepsu and Punjab Governments are sponsoring such ventures and Harkishan Singh's *Punjabi*

Sahit from Jullundur has for many years maintained a very high standard of writing. Finally, the Punjabis must produce a school of honest critics who can help the creative writer onwards and warn the unwary reader against trash. Hitherto the Punjabi literary world has been a narrow one indulging in much back-scratching and promoting of each other's works. Now it must learn to sift the good from the bad and launch it on its long-awaited renaissance.

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SANSKRIT LITERATURE

V. RAGHAVAN

INTRODUCTION

SANSKRIT, the classical language of India, has had a history of four thousand years in this country, its earliest literature, the hymns of the *Rigveda*, being also the oldest and most extensive remains of Indo-European literature. The antiquity of Sanskrit is well known, but its continuity is not less remarkable. In the same accents in which the Vedic seer uttered, his mantra is even now intoned ; and in the same cadence and diction in which Kalidasa and Bana composed, a Sanskritist today writes his verse or prose. The Vedic dialects, the freedom of the popular epic style, the rules for the spoken word in Panini's grammar, the diction of early drama, all point to a period when Sanskrit was a living spoken tongue. When out of its dialects a literary norm got standardised and the early primary Prakrits were coming into increasing literary use, Sanskrit still continued to hold its authoritative position ; for, as observed by the latest writer on the language, "though it appears paradoxical at first sight, the Sanskrit language only reached its full development as a language of culture and administration at a time when it had ceased to be a mother tongue."[1] Buddhism and Jainism which started with using the popular languages, could not by-pass Sanskrit to which they had eventually to come. Sanskrit consolidated itself as a pan-Indian language by reason of the common culture and thought it embodied; the mother of most of the mother-tongues of the country, it was and is still the strongest bond of the country's unity.

After the early growth of religious literature in Pali and Ardhamagadhi, there was the cultivation of literary activity in the classical Prakrits like the Sauraseni which figured in Sanskrit drama and the Maharashtri in which there was an efflorescence of poetry; not only did this Prakrit literature conform in pattern to Sanskrit, alongside of which it grew, but the very grammar of these languages was codified by Sanskrit. When these Prakrits

[1]T. Burrow, *The Sanskrit Language*, Faber & Faber, London 1955, p. 57

also, by their literary stylisation, got standardized, further popular tongues took their place, first the Apabhramsa and then the Modern Indo-Aryan languages of North India.

As in the case of the Prakrits, so in the case of the South Indian languages, the impact of Sanskrit led to a literary renaissance; vocabulary, forms of expression, themes and literary genre from Sanskrit permeated these languages; three of these which enlarged their alphabet on the basis of Sanskrit, allowed themselves to be influenced by Sanskrit to the maximum extent to which any language could be influenced by another; in two of them whole passages of Sanskrit with a sprinkling of words or the terminations only of the languages, could pass for compositions in those languages; and in two of them, as in the Javanese, there also arose a style of poetic composition, as also some expository prose, called *Mani-pravala* (gem and coral) in which the poet made an artistic blend of Sanskrit and the local language. In fact, such was the intimacy with which Sanskrit flourished together with the local tongues that till recently Sanskrit classics were preserved in palm-leaf or paper manuscript, or even printed, mostly in the regional scripts.

Sanskrit also added two further dimensions to its magnitude. From the 1st century B.C. onwards, through Buddhism, it spread into Central Asia and the Far East; and from about the 2nd century A.D. onwards, it was the vehicle of the Hindu culture which spread over the countries of South-east Asia, the Sanskrit epics, dramas and poems giving these countries a script and literature and the arts of dance, drama, music and sculpture. Thus not only did Sanskrit consolidate the entire sub-continent of India, but it also brought the whole of the Far East and South-east Asia under a cultural homogeneity.

In this long sweep of its history, Sanskrit put forth intensive literary activity in every department—literature, philosophy, arts and science. In sheer quantity this literature of which only a part has come into print—the bulk lying in manuscript libraries and a good part having been lost—represents a prodigious class of world's literature. As to variety, Sanskrit has dealt with every imaginable branch of human activity. In respect of quality, originality and executional skill, its philosophical systems and poetry and drama could be cited; some of the productions in these branches, like the *Upanishads* and the *Gita*, form the most

precious part of the heritage of India and have indeed become part of world thought today; the two Sanskrit epics not only inspired a large mass of literature in the regional languages, but with the characters depicted by them moulded the national ideals; and poetry and drama, such as Kalidasa and Sudraka produced, still remain the highest achieved in India in these realms. Literary activity in the popular tongues specialised in a few select sectors, like religion and lyric or epic poetry, and, for the greater part, literary criticism, logic and metaphysics, medicine, art, law, astronomy, mathematics, etc. were left to Sanskrit to be dealt with by it. When the language of a writer or speaker of one of the leading regional languages is screened, one finds that wherever the thought touched higher ideas, the vocabulary became Sanskrit. However much a regional literature might have grown and whatever the eminence of a writer in a local language, neither the literature nor the writer could afford to lay aside the Sanskritic heritage and equipment upon which they continuously drew. The renaissance of spirit that quickened the country in the recent past into new life derived substantial inspiration from a new awareness of the glory of India's past, and the content of this awareness, for its greater part, is made up of a fresh appreciation of the heritage of Sanskrit. To a large extent therefore, the spirit behind the new productions has been Sanskrit, though the media have been the local languages.

Classical Sanskrit literature is remarkable for its variety and richness of forms; to take *belles lettres* alone, Sanskrit developed the longer epic, the shorter one and the minor poem; it had the heroic, the descriptive and the lyrical; it produced the reflective, the didactic, the historical and the narrative. If in its poems it could display a wonderful variety of metrical beauty, in the rise and fall of the periods of its prose it plumbed the musical possibilities of the language; combining the charms of both, it evolved the genre called the *Champu*. In drama again, Sanskrit poets gave many types, the heroic *Nataka*, the social *Prakarana*, longer plays and shorter ones, including one-act pieces, the farce, the monologue, the historical and the political and the religious and the allegorical play; in the later period, the Sanskrit stage developed also many minor varieties of dance-drama. Above all, the theory of Rasa, one of the key words of Indian culture, like Dharma, was, with its twin concepts of Suggestion (*Dhvani*)

and Propriety (*Auchitya*), the contribution of Sanskrit Alankara Sastra, not superseded by anything produced in the local languages.

A Living Language

It should not be supposed from all this that Sanskrit kept itself on a pedestal of its own, following an old set norm and reproducing traditional patterns. An analysis of its long history and the rich and varied growth of its literature discloses the changes it underwent and the counter-influence which it received from the popular languages; in phonetics and morphology, in vocabulary and semantics, it was affected by its own Prakrits as well as by the languages of families different from its own; in metre and embellishments in poetry, in motifs and themes, in romances and narratives, in the dance-drama forms of its theatre (the *Uparupakas*), it received contributions from the different regions where it met local traditions and forms; with the same liberal outlook with which it gave of its best, Sanskrit, which believed in the *pancha-sila* of live and let live, incorporated into itself elements of beauty in the regional cultures. The merit of Sanskrit is that it was developed by all parts of India; with its characteristic genius it went about doing quietly what the Constitution wants Hindi to do today for becoming the Rashtrabhasha—to allow itself to be developed by the different regions and to assimilate things of value in the regional languages.

Sanskrit authors kept themselves in close touch with contemporary events and utilised freely the fresh material with which they came into contact. In the earlier phase, there was the influence from Greece and Rome, e.g. in astronomy. In periods closer to us, the Moghul times, Sanskrit writers learnt Persian, compiled Perso-Sanskrit lexicons and translated from Persian and Arabic. The Sanskritists never lived in isolation, but they assimilated in such a manner that while retaining their individuality, they integrated the elements they took organically into their own patterns. If the later Islamic contacts were a continuation of the earlier Middle-East contacts which began with Chosrau Anosharwan (531-579 A.D.) and were strengthened during the Caliphate when medicine and mathematics in the Sanskrit works were translated and transmitted to the West, the European contacts in the modern times may be said to be

a resumption of the intellectual contacts of ancient India with Athens, Alexandria and Rome.

The Indo-European contact in modern times has been of equal significance in the two continents: The discovery of Sanskrit by the West had been the most significant event in European thought since the Renaissance. So far as India is concerned, this discovery of Sanskrit had a two-fold effect: on the one hand, Indians who received a modern education woke into a new realisation of the values of their cultural heritage, and the work of the western orientalist produced a literary and cultural revival in India; on the other, the impact of western modes of thought and ways of life led to a process of change in the traditional institutions and learning. The pursuit of Sanskrit itself bifurcated into the modern and the traditional methods, the former being pursued in the new English schools, colleges and universities and the latter in traditional *tols*, *pathasalas* and colleges started especially for fostering that type of study. The influence of the West, its literature as well as notions, brought to bear through education and administration, produced its reactions in both the types of Sanskritists. Consequently, Sanskrit literature entered on a new phase with the rise of modern European influence.

With the first impact, creative activity in Sanskrit which was still going on received a fresh impetus but gradually, with English usurping the place of a common all-India medium held previously by Sanskrit, and with the replacement by English of the regional language as the medium through which Sanskrit was studied, Sanskrit was taken away more and more from daily life and mother-tongue: its study became increasingly archaeological. When we note the early gusto with which the Sanskrit Pandit, on the first onset of English influence, started a Sanskrit journal, translated a foreign work and wrote novels and stories, and compare it with the feeling of helplessness that has come over him today, we can trace the course of his demoralisation and the general insignificance into which Sanskrit as a live medium of expression gradually fell. Even patrons of Sanskrit, who enthusiastically pleaded for encouragement of Sanskrit studies, looked down systematically on original writing in Sanskrit. Luckily there has been a revival of interest in the literary pursuit of Sanskrit and even among Sanskritists who have

received a modern education, there has been a growing desire to cultivate the language as a vehicle of their thought and expression.

At the beginning of the British period, Sanskrit education was in its usual swing and the tradition of the erudite Pandit was still in force. During the 19th century, the Sanskrit Pandit or his newly educated son or grandson was still writing in Sanskrit, some of them, most facile and prolific, having produced about a hundred works. When printing became the normal mode of circulating literature and the medium of publication for Sanskrit did not develop adequately, all this literature remained buried in manuscripts. A full account of modern Sanskrit literature cannot be given, as the bulk of the material to be surveyed remains unpublished and is difficult of access. Many a contemporary writer in Sanskrit has poems, plays and stories which he cannot hope to publish for the delectation of the wider public all over the country. But this lack of publicity should not blind one to the fact that there is a continuity of creative activity in Sanskrit and that in recent times a sufficient volume of modern literature has been produced in that language, and it may not suffer in comparison with the productions in other languages of the country.

It is necessary to draw attention to this, as reputed books on the history of Sanskrit literature bring their detailed account only up to about the 12th century and round it off with the mention of a few stray writings of the later centuries. This defect has been made good by one writer at least[2], who compiled a good deal of data on modern Sanskrit writers in the different parts of India and their works. Some samples of modern Sanskrit writings were published in Sanskrit journals which have become defunct now and the back volumes of which are difficult to secure. Surveys like the present one, and two others which the present writer has made[3], will therefore serve to give Indian *litterateurs* and the general reading public an idea of the nature and extent of this literature and to kindle interest in it.

Contact with the West

The modern trends in Sanskrit literature are in the main the

[2]M. Krishnamachariar, *History of Classical Sanskrit Literature*, Madras 1937

[3]*Modern Sanskrit Writings*, Adyar Library Bulletin, 1956, and *Sanskrit Literature* 1700-1937, Journal of the Madras University, Centenary Number, 1957

result of the contact with western literature; the major forms in which the new interest expressed itself are the starting of Sanskrit journals, translation of western classics, the growth of the short story, minor poem and the novel, the development of prose used for narrative, descriptive and critical writing in the form of a short essay or a long thesis and for general discussion and documentation, the cultivation of literary appreciation and historical criticism on western lines and the exposition of modern scientific knowledge. Within the country itself, Sanskritists who read the latest productions in the regional languages or themselves wrote in their mother-tongues too, rendered into the classical language the more noteworthy works, old or contemporary, in the regional languages, thus re-cementing the close association of Sanskrit with those languages. Thirdly, the new social and political movements in the public life of the country produced their repercussions on the Sanskrit writers, and here it is, in the literature produced by Sanskritists in the new context, that one sees Sanskrit alive in the full sense of the term as the vehicle of expression for contemporary life and thought.

As the traditional form of Sanskrit learning has been continuing, Pandits steeped in the older tradition continue to compose long and short poems, hymns, plays, religious works, commentaries and Sastraic and other technical treatises in the old style. We have had recently in the South writers like Bhatta Sri Narayana Sastri who wrote ninety-three plays, Radhamangalam Narayana Sastri, author of hundred and eight works, and Kavyakantham Ganapati Sastri who was equally prolific; and there have been similar writers in other centres of learning. The type of composition in which the learning and skill of the composer exhibits itself in the construction of verses yielding pictorial designs (*bandhas*) is still practised[4]; C. N. Rama Sastri of Mysore wrote (1905) a dialogue between Ravana and Sita (*Sita-Ravana-samvada-jhari*) in which the same verse uttered by Ravana, with deletion of one letter, becomes Sita's reply to him.[4a] Numberless commentaries in the old style have been written on poems and plays, particularly those prescribed for University

[4]E.g. See T. S. Srinivasadesikacharya, in the Mysore Sanskrit College Magazine, 1951, March-December; Mathuranatha Sarma, Jaipur, *Jayapuravaibhava* (1947)—the Chitrachatvara section

[4a]*Niroshthya-dasavatarastava* by Tatti Srinivasacharya, Tanjore 1900; also T. S. Srinivasadesikacharya, *MSCMM*, 1951, March-Dec.

courses, by old-type Pandits[5] as well as accomplished English educated Sanskritists[6]. Among those who have carried on polemical literature in the field of the systems of philosophy, Mm. Anantakrishna Sastri, Madhusudana Sarma (Jaipur) and others of this class in Banaras, Calcutta, Mithila and Kerala may be mentioned. It is however not possible to give a detailed account of the large amount of literature of the traditional type which is still being produced.

Just as he employed the Sanskrit Pandit to compile digests of law for his administrative needs, the British ruler induced the traditional Pandit to write panegyrics in honour of the British sovereign—Victoria, Edward VII and George V; and the Pandit responded with Mahakavyas and even plays in the same strain in which his ancestor would have eulogised the Paramara, the Chalukya or the Vijayanagara dynasty. While we may not attach value today to this exhibition of overflowing loyalty to the British, we should note here the introduction of a fresh theme for a Sanskrit Kavya or Nataka which incidentally served also as a Sanskrit history of the English or of the British conquest of India. In fact, some of these works were intended as histories. The *Angreja-Chandrika* of Vinayaka and the anonymous *Itihasa-tamomani* were early examples of history; the *Nūtanodantotsa* (Calcutta 1839) is a description of England based on Miss Bird's work; the *Rajangala-mahodyana* (Kumbhakonam 1894) of Ramaswami Raju of Tanjore on the British includes lives of distinguished Indians also. Tirumala Bukkapattanam Srinivasacharya described the First World War in his *Angla-jarmani-yuddha-vivarana*. On a Sanskrit classicist soaked in the poetry of love in Sanskrit, the sacrifice of the Empire for his beloved which Edward VIII made, produced naturally a deep impression; the result was, we had the poem *Yaduvriddha-sauharda* by A. Gopala Iyengar (Madras 1937).

History and Biography

The writing of historical Kavyas on the local dynasties continued but we should note here a series of accounts written with a new historical spirit bringing up the history of India to

[5] E.g. Mahamahopadhyaya Lakshmana Suri, Madras

[6] E.g. M. R. Kale in Bombay and S. R. Ray in Calcutta; the *Aryasatakavyakhya* and the *Anandarangachampuvyakhya* of the present writer may also be cited.

the British period. These new historical accounts appeared in prose as well in verse and dealt with either the whole field of Indian history or particular phases of it. The *Itihasadipika*[7] in five chapters brings the account up to the wars with Tipu Sultan and the Mahratta kingdoms. The *Bharatetihasa* (*SSPP*[8] 1948-49) is a prose account of Indian history. Mm. T. Ganapati Sastri wrote the *Bharatanuvarnana*, a history of India, and Ramavatara Sarma, the *Bharatiyam Itivrittam*, a similar work. The *Bharatetivrittasara* is a historical work by Lakshminatha Sastri of Jaipur[9]. In the *Bharatasangraha*, Kavyakantham Ganapati Sastri reviews Indian history[10]. In the *Sryanka Kavya*[11], in 16 short cantos, Kavi Krishna Kaur presented the early history of the Sikhs. Sripada Sastri Hasurkar started a series of historical accounts in a series called *Bharata-nara-ratnamala* and gave us the *Sikha-guru-charitramritam* (Indore 1933) on the Sikh gurus. The *Sah.* published in Vol. IV a historical poem on Mahmud Gazni, the *Gasanimuhammada-charitra* and in the same journal appeared also short prose accounts of historical figures—Chandragupta, Asoka, Samyogita, and others. In the *SR.* (1914) we have an account of Alexander's invasion of India. In his *Svadesiya-katha* published in his *SC.* (1907) Appa Sastri set forth facts and figures of the history of India and dealt with the good and bad features of the British rule. In *Sri* from Srinagar, the *Rajatarangini* of Kashmir which had been brought up to date in the post-Kalhana times is brought up to the further modern times by Govinda Rajanaka.

Older literature on the lives of noteworthy personalities mixed fable and fact and narrated in poetic and eulogistic style the lives of important individuals with descriptive excursions obscuring the few historical data. In the new biographies, the

[7]Printed : date not known.

[8]The following abbreviations in this survey represent the Sanskrit journals noted against them :

SSPP.	—Samskrita Sahitya Parishat Patrika, Calcutta
SR.	—Samskrita Ratnakara, Jaipur, Banaras
Sah.	—Sahridaya, Srirangam
AV.	—Amritavani, Bangalore
MV.	—Madhuravani, Gadag, Dharwar
UP.	—Udyanapatrika, Tiruvayyaru, Tamilnad
MSCMM.	—Maharajah's Sanskrit College Magazine, Mysore
Manj.	—Manjusha, Calcutta
SC.	—Samskrita Chandrika, Kolhapur

[9]See p. 40, Introduction to *Jayapuravaibhava*, Jaipur 1947

[10]See p. 11, Introduction to his *Umasahasra*, Sirasi, North Kanara, 1943

[11]Lahore 1935

high flown style gave place to a simple narrative prose and the writer concentrated more on incidents and details of the lives and times of his subjects. Such accounts have appeared on a variety of personalities, historical figures of the past, saints ancient, medieval and modern, scholars, political leaders and public figures of the recent times. Leaving those of the last category to another section, we shall notice the biographies of the other categories. Ambikadatta Vyasa of Jaipur wrote a historical prose narrative on Sivaji, the *Sivarajavijaya*, which appeared serially in the *Samskrita Chandrika*, Vols 7, 8. Sripada Sastri Hasurkar wrote in prose on Prithviraj, Sivaji and Rana Pratap Singh, in a series devoted to heroes of India (*Bharata-vira-ratnamala*, Indore 1920, 1922). Sakharam Sastri's account of Rani Ahalya Bai takes the form of a Mahakavya (Satara 1951). In similar Kavya-style, Ramanatha Nanda of Jeypore, Orissa, wrote the *Jayapurarajavamsavali* (Jeypore 1938). Greater interest attaches to the *Chalukya Charita* (Madras 1938) in which Paravastu Lakshminarasimha Swami collates and weaves together the Chalukyan inscriptions into a connected historical account of the dynasty. The *Sahucharita* (Kolhapur 1939) of V.A. Latkar Sastri is a prose biography of a recent Ruler of the Kolhapur State. In a series of short simple accounts under the heading *Bharata-ratnas*, the Nagpur Sanskrit periodical, *Samskrita Bhavitavyam*, makes a laudable endeavour to acquaint readers with the notable personalities of the different regions and literatures of India. Historical episodes have also been used for fiction, as can be seen from a further section in this survey.

Saints of different parts of the country have been more frequently dealt with in prose and verse biographies. Alamelamma, a lady of Mysore, wrote an account of the Buddha in her *Buddhacharitramrita* (1922). Hasurkar started also a *Bharatasadhu-ratnamala* in which he gave prose biographies of Vallabhacharya and Ramdas. The lives of Sri Chaitanya and his elder contemporary Advaita Acharya have been told in prose by Kaliharadasa Vasu in *SSPP.* (1928-29 ff and 1938-39 ff). Jnanesvara, Tukaram, Ramdas and Mira form the subject of poems[12] by Mrs. Kshama Rao. On Satyanarayana, there is an account in *SSPP.* (1946 ff), under the title *Satyanubhava*. Rajavallabha Sastri has a Mahakavya on the

[12]1944, 1950 ff. 1953 ff.

celebrated Nrisimhabharatri Swami of Sringeri[13]; epsiodes in the life and *vijaya-yatra* of the Sankaracharya of Kamakoti have figured in three works[14]. Of the new religious leaders, Dayananda is the subject of the *Dayananda prabhava* of Vamanacharya, of works of Akhilananda Sarma, of the *Dayananda Digvijaya* (Allahabad 1910) etc., and recently of a large Mahakavya, *Aryodaya Kavya*, in twenty-one cantos by Gangaprasad Upadhyaya (Allahabad 1952); in the last work, the author gives a large historical setting to the advent of Dayananda, and describes Hindu decadence and revival, foreign domination of India and the gaining of freedom. The journal *Sri* from Srinagar carried accounts of some Kashmirian saints. P. Panchapagesa Sastri wrote in prose the life of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa (Madras 1937) and K. S. Nagarajan of Bangalore the *Vivekananda Charita*[15]. Among musician-saints, the two famous Carnatic music composers, Tyagaraja and Muttusvami Dikshitar, have each a Mahakavya on their life, times and work, that on the former being the production of Sundaresa Sarma (Kumbhakonam 1937) and on the latter, yet to be published, a production of the present writer.

The veteran Andhra Sanskritist Kasi Krishnacharya narrates the story of *Valmiki* in easy prose, introducing a number of anecdotes, subsidiary stories and other interesting literary features (Guntur 1957).

In fields outside Hinduism, the life of Jesus Christ has been told in Sanskrit prose (*Yisucharitam*) by Sri Nilakantha Sastri of Trivandrum; and Sri Gunde Rao Harkare of Gadwal has translated five chapters of the *Koran* (Ch. I, ptd., Islamic Culture, Hyderabad, XIX, *i*, 1945).

The life and work of scholars have also been recorded: Chandra Bhushan Sarma wrote a short account *Jivitavrittanta*, of Pt. Bechana Rama of the Banaras Sanskrit College (Banaras 1890). The *Vidvat-charita-panchaka* of Narayana Sastri Khiste (Banaras 1928) describes in Champu form the lives of five leading Mahamahopadhyayas of Banaras—Gangadhara Sastri Manavalli, Kailasachandra, Damodara Sastri, Sivakumara Sastri and Ramkrishna (Tatya) Sastri. The *Samskrita Chandrika* published

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[13] Madras 1936

[14] E.g. *Sri Chandrasekharavijayamaharatnakara* by P. Umamahesvara Sastri, 1939

[15] *AV.*; also separately, 1947

prose accounts of writers of old and modern scholars in Sanskrit. Mm. Yajnaswami Sastri wrote the *Tyagarajavijayam* on the life of his grandfather, the distinguished Mm. Raju (Tyagaraja) Sastri of Mannargudi (Tanjore 1904). Kshama Rao's *Sankarajivanakhyana* (Bombay 1939) is a verse biography of the lady's father, the distinguished Sanskrit research scholar Sankara Panduranga Pandit. The *Haranamamrita Kavya* (Bikaner 1955) of Vidyadhara Sastri is an account of his grandfather, dealing incidentally with the Sanskrit activities of the latter's times. The *Brahmarshivilasa* (Lucknow 1955) of Virendra Bahadur Singh is on the life and renunciation of a scholar-recluse and the writer shows his learning in the Sastras also. Dinanatha Trivedi has given a brief biography of Pt. Purushottama Sarma Caturvedi. The *Sivakaivalya Charita* by Dr. V. M. Kaikini (Bombay 1950) is on the life of an ancestor of the author and contains interesting historical information on migration of Pandit families. Even a European orientalist, Lewis Rice, has been celebrated in a Sanskrit biography (Padmaraj Pandit, Bangalore 1905).

More precisely the autobiography may be called a modern development[15a]. Korada Ramachandra Kavi (1816-1900), is said to have written a *Svodaya Kavya*, yet to be published. Durgananda Swami wrote on his life in the *Vidyodaya*. Among recently published works, there is the *Isvaradarsana* or *Tapovanacharita* (Trichur 1950) of Svami Tapovanam of Malabar, who passed away recently in his Himalayan Ashram, written in an excellent prose style.

Among the enlightened Indian rulers some, under whose regimes their States registered all-round progress, cannot be forgotten. First among these comes the late Krishna Raja Wodayar, Maharaja of Mysore, on whom there are many poems in the early issues of *MSCMM*[16], in some of which modern features in the State like electricity, the Cauvery Dam, the Jog Falls, the Kolar Mines, the Hulikeri Tunnel, etc. are described. H.H. Rama Varma of Cochin, uncle of the present Maharaja and a distinguished Sanskrit scholar, is the subject of the *Ramavarmavijaya*[17]. The *Mala*[18] is on the present Maharaja of Cochin, an equally distinguished Sanskrit scholar who has to his

[15a] *Pace* the accounts of themselves by Bana and Dandin

[16] 1925, by Rallapalli Anantakrishna Sarma, Narasimhacharya, Singeriangar and others

[17] By Kunhen Varier, Published 1930

[18] By A. V. Krishna Varier, Trichur 1949

credit a number of Sanskrit works written in the traditional style. The *Jayapuravaibhava*[19] of Mathuranatha Kavi Sastri is an account of modern Jaipur, its ruling house and the Sanskrit scholars and scholars' families settled in Jaipur.

Critical Perspective

The historical study of Sanskrit language and its literature was made part of the courses of study in Sanskrit; it was included in the curricula of studies even in the traditional Sanskrit Pathasalas. It was all the more necessary to inculcate the historical and critical perspective in the Pandit. Thus there arose the Sanskrit prose accounts on the modern science of Comparative Philology, with special reference to the Indo-European, and the history of Sanskrit literature. Rajaraja Varma included in his *Laghupaniniya*[20] a supplement on Indo-European linguistics. R. Sama Sastri wrote the *Bhasha-tantra* in the *MSCMM*. (1925-26); in *Sah*. (III) appeared *Aryabhasha-charita* and in *SSPP*. (1935), *Devabhasha-devanagara-aksharayoh utpatthih* by Dvijendranath Guha Choudhary. In book-form, R. S. Venkatarama Sastri wrote the *Bhashasastrapravesini*[21], and S.T.G.Varadachariar the *Bhashasastrasangraha*[22]. Similarly, accounts of the development of Sanskrit literature in all its branches were also brought out. R. Srinivasaraghavan wrote the *Girvanabhashabhyudaya* in the *Sah*. (III); in the *Mitragoshthi*, Girijaprasad Sarma wrote prose essays on Sanskrit poets; in the *MSCMM*. Rajagopala Chakravarti wrote the *Kavikavyavichara*; in the *UP*. the *Samskritagranthacharitam* is appearing serially; P. P. S. Sastri and K. L. V. Sastri translated[23] Macdonell's account of Vedic literature from his *History of Sanskrit Literature*. R. S. Venkatarama Sastri published in Madras a history of Vedic and classical Sanskrit literature and recently Prof. Hansraj Aggarwal of the Panjab University has produced in two volumes a larger work on the same subject[24]. The *Samskritasahityavimarsa* of Dwijendranath Sastri (Meerut 1957) is another history of Sanskrit literature in Sanskrit. Many Pandits and research scholars who

[19] Jaipur 1947
[20] 2nd edn., Trichinopoly 1913
[21] Madras 1938, Balamanorama Press
[22] 1933, Chittugudur and Madras
[23] Palghat 1927
[24] Ludhiana 1951

are working in the field of textual criticism and critical editions of classics present their introductions and critical apparatus in Sanskrit instead of in English, as thereby the circle of users of these editions is enlarged. Pandits like Madhusudana Sarma, Jaipur, have produced in Sanskrit monographs on research subjects like Indra, Chaturvarnya, Atri, and Yajna[25].

SOCIAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL MOVEMENTS

The period we are surveying was also one of new movements in the social, religious and philosophical fields. With Indians taking after western ways of life in an increasing manner, with overseas travel becoming common, with the criticism which the West was levelling and Indian social reformers were repeating against Hindu customs and institutions—early marriage, widowhood, caste, untouchability etc—the orthodox Hindu found himself the champion of the traditional ways. To begin with, the Pandit boldly faced the rising tide of the reformist movements and wrote many dissertations against sea-travel, post-puberty marriage, widow-remarriage[26], etc. In the socio-religious sphere there was the Arya Samaj movement which with its call-back to the pristine purity of Vedic religion, gave a fillip to Sanskrit study, and for its spread prepared many text-books. Among the polemical literature which the Pandit produced is also included critiques of Dayananda Sarasvati's views. The Sanatanist's opposition to further socio-religious legislative interferences in the pre-Independence and post-Independence days continued. Such of the Sanskrit journals as are being edited by orthodox Pandits carried writings criticising the reforms : In the *SR* for example (1951) there is a short drama by Sivanatha Upadhyaya in which two ladies are featured as characters and are made to discuss the Hindu Code Bill and

[25] *Indravijaya*, 1930; *Chaturvarnya-siksha*, 1927; *Atrikhyati*, 1926; *Yajnasarasvati*, 1946; *Maharshikula vaibhava*, 1956.

[26] E.g. *Abdhi-nau-yana-mimamsa*, Kasi Sesha Venkatachala Sastri, Bombay 1903; *Durvritta-dhikkriti*, Appa Sastri in *SC.*, 1907; *Vivaha-samaya-mimamsa-Abdhiyana-vimarsau*, N. S. Anantakrishna Sastri 1913; *Bala-vivaha-hani-Prakasa*, Ramaswarupa, Etawah 1922; *Ritumati-vivaha-vidhi-nishedha-pramanani*, Madras 1912; *Parinaya-mimamsa*, K. G. Natesa Sastri, Srirangam 1913; *Vayo-nirnaya*, P. Ganapati Sastri, Kumbhakonam 1910. *Sri*, journal of the Sanskrit Parishat, Srinagar, carried serials on Age of Consent, Temple Entry, etc. There were also liberal Pandits who sided the reformists; e.g. Kasichandra who wrote the *Uddhara Chandrika*, on taking back into the orthodox fold those who had crossed the seas (Bulletin of the R. K. Mission Institute of Culture, June 1956, p. 132)

point out how the Bill would introduce a Pakistan within each home in Bharat. But there were also Sanskritists who welcomed the reforms and in the field of sociology or Dharma Sastra, two noteworthy works produced in this period are the *Manavadharma-sara* of Dr. Bhagavandas and the *Arya-vidhana* or *Visvesvara Smriti* of Mm. Bishveshwar Nath Reu of Jodhpur. In the former, available in a longer and a shorter version, couched in freely flowing Anustubh verses breathing an ardent love of the country and its cultural heritage, the author, with his extensive knowledge, reviews Indian history, the differnt systems of philosophy and the Hindu view of life here and in the hereafter, seeks the true significance of Sastraic injunctions relating to caste, women, temples, etc., compares Hinduism with other religions, enquires into the rise and fall of Hindu kingdoms and points out that one of the great drawbacks of the culture is its failure to achieve a united national feeling, *Sangha-sakti*. In his equally voluminous modern Smriti, Bishveshwar Nath Reu incorporates new scientific geography and history, modern hygiene, birth-control, etc.

When Hinduism had to be safeguarded against the Buddhist and Jain faiths, Sanskrit philosophers studied thoroughly the metaphysics of the rival schools and kept up a continuous philosophical contest in the works they produced. Later, unfortunately, the Pandit dissipated himself with his internecine disputes, the pluralists and the monists, the realists and the idealists, the theists and the absolutists, and the different theistic sects fighting with one another. While the earlier Sanskritist forced the opponent to read his language, literature and school and met him in debate in the pages of his works, the later Pandit, failed to play this role when Hinduism was faced with Islam first and Christianity later[27]; hence no literature developed in this line and to that extent Indian philosophical literature failed to keep itself abreast of the need of the times; this was one of the reasons why on the side of the oncoming social changes which alone the Pandit fought, he was waging a losing battle. In the same manner, without facing the very ideology of the

[27]There is of course a stray exception here and there, e.g. in the *Khrishta-dharma-kaumudi-samalochana* of Brajalal Mukhopadhyaya (Calcutta 1894) which was a critique of Dr. Ballantyne's criticism of Hinduism from the Christian standpoint, and the reply to John Muir's *Mataparikshа* (against Hinduism) by Pandit Nilakantha Sastri Gore in his *Sastra-tattva-vinirnaya* (Ujjain 1951) before the Pandit was converted to Christianity.

West, its notion of history and evolution, the Pandit dissipated himself with answering misinterpretations of Vedic or other passages and concepts in Sanskrit literature spread by the western orientalist. Even within the Hindu fold, the new religious and philosophical movements that arose did not receive due critical notice in literature; for the ferment of thought witnessed, the literary output from the opposition is insufficient. Among the stray criticisms are those against Arya Samaj already noted and a Sanskrit tract against the new twenty-four chapter Gita issued by the Suddha Dharma Mandal in Madras, the *Nutana Gitā Vaichitryavilasa* by 'Bhagavadgita Dasa' (Madras 1917).

Were there at least in this period, new lines on which the traditional Pandits developed aspects of their systems of philosophy ? There were and we might note here the bold and original stand which a few Pandits and scholars took : Ramasubba Sastri of Triuvisanallur was a Pandit well known for his original interpretations which sometimes took disconcerting lines, as when he attempted to dilute the position of Advaita in the Brahma Sutras and Sankara's Bhashya thereon[28]. More recently, Y. Subba Rao of Bangalore started expounding a new view about the nature of Avidya in Advaita, and purporting to save Sankara from his followers and Advaita itself as a philosophy from the formal logical structure that it later became, he wrote his thesis *Mulavidyanirasa* (Bangalore 1929), refuting the possibility of a positive causal nescience; and later when he assumed the recluse-order with the name Sacchidananda Sarasvati, he followed it up with a new gloss, the *Sugama* on the *Adhyasabhashya* of Sankara (Hole Narasipur 1955). K. Venkataratnam Pantulu propounded a new system called *Aksharasankhya* in his *Margadayini.* Towards the close of the last centruy Appayacharya (died 1901) had adumbrated the new eclectic school of Samkhya-Yoga-samucchaya or Anubhava-advaita and written a large number of works to expound this thought[29].

Spirit of Tolerance

The spirit of tolerance is a part of the Sanskrit heritage; while

[28]This interpretation of Sankara was criticised by Gaurinatha Sastri in his *Sankarabhashyagambhiryanirnaya-khandana* (Vani Vilas Press) and defended by Venkataraghava Sastri in his *Bhashya-gambhiryanirnaya-mandana* (1913).

[29]See *New Catalogus Catalogorum,* Madras University, I, pp. 194-5

Sanskrit had fostered the growth of thought through its dialectical works relating to the differnt schools, it had never forgotten. to underline the truth that the diverse paths led to the same goal. This higher spirit of understanding has received greater emphasis in modern Indian thought and it is gratifying to note that among the Pandits themselves who wrote Sanskrit treatises in this period, this spirit is to be seen. We may draw attention here to at least two works breathing this spirit; Polaham Rama Sastri wrote a dissertation entitled *Chaturmatasamarasya*, (Kumbhakonam 1944) seeking points of affinity among the four schools of Vedanta. A more important and comprehensive Sanskrit treatise on these lines is the *Darsanodaya* of Mm. Lakshmipuram Srinivasacharya written with the avowed object of reducing sectarianism and promoting understanding.

Among the new movements, the Arya Samaj is the one which has been intimately associated with Sanskrit and its revival. The school produced many Sanskrit works expounding its ideas and ideals and Akhilananda Sarma is its most prolific and gifted poet and writer[30]. Among recent writers of this school is Brahmamuni Parivrajaka of Haridvar who has written a new commentary on the *Vedanta Sutras* called *Vedanta Darsana* (Hoshiarpur 1954) in which the methods of interpretation of the classical Bhashyakaras are criticised. The Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement has so far produced only some hymns in Sanskrit[31], though, as noticed below, the two founders of this movement have been made the subject of some literary pieces[32]. The Asramas of Ramana Maharshi and Aurobindo have had a more noteworthy record of Sanskrit writings. Kavykantham Ganapati Sastri, later Vasishtha Muni, a highly competent poet, became a votary of Ramana and gave us a *Ramana Gita* and succinct metrical exposition of Ramana's Advaita in his *Sad-darsana* on which his pupil, T. V. Kapali Sastri, wrote a gloss. V. Jagadisvara Sastri composed hymns on Ramana, the *Ramanastotravali* (Tiruvannamalai). Kapali Sastri later entered the Asram at Pondicherry and became the chief Sanskritist there; from Pondicherry, Sastri wrote the *Sadhana-samrajya* (1952)

[30]See *New Catalogus Calalogorum,* I, pp. 15-16 for his works.

[31]Cf. *Ramakrishnasahasranamastotra* by M. Ramakrishna Bhat, Bangalore 1950.

[32]The *Song of the Sannyasin* by Vivekananda was translated into Sanskrit by Nityananda Bharati.

in twenty-five verses on the place of *Sadhana* in Aurobindo's yoga, the *Ahnika-stava* (1954), a collection of hymns, and his magnum opus, the new Sanskrit commentary (*Siddhanjana*[33]) on the *Rigveda Samhita* according to Aurobindo's interpretation. Going to the traditional Sutra-form in which Indian schools set forth their tenets, Ambalal Purani of the same Asrama presents succinctly Aurobindo's yoga in his *Purnayoga-sutrani*[34].

There have appeared also other philosophical writings in Sanskrit from authors adopting their own points of view as also general Sanskrit essays and tracts on religious and philosophical themes. The distinguished Research scholar and Pandit, Mm. Ramavatara Sarma wrote the *Paramarthadarsanabhashya*, representing, as it were, a seventh *Darsana* in addition to the six traditional systems of Indian philosophy. Of University Professors of Philosophy, Jwala Parsad of Amaravati has a new system of thought in his *Tattvadarsana*[35] composed in Sutra sytle and supplemented by a gloss; here an attempt is made, not quite successful, to adjust Indian Philosophy to modern scientific ideas. M. A. Upadhyaya of Baroda, who followed Gandhiji, expounded a system in his *Isvarasvarupa*[36] which discountenanced caste and untouchability and even questioned rebirth, etc. *Purnajyoti* (1929) of Swami Purnananda of Hrishikesh is a general non-sectarian exposition of philosophy conceived in a modern way without caste-distinction and applicable to all and inculcating Dharma, Vairagya, devotion, Yoga, etc.; it is written in verse and prose. Dr. Sampurnanand, Chief Minister, U. P., is an ardent promoter of Sanskrit who loves to write and speak Sanskrit. The *Chidvilasa* in his name[37] is a Sanskrit version of a philosophical essay of his ; he has written also a commentary of his own called *Srutiprabha* on the *Vratyakanda* of the *Atharvaveda,* Swami Agamananda of the Ramakrishna Math, Kaladi, has recently brought out a Sanskrit dissertation on *Dharma*[38] in which the Swamiji examines the concept of Dharma in relation to politics and economics also.

The study of European philosophy in the college curriculum,

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[33]Pondicherry, two parts 1950, 1951
[34]Pondicherry 1955
[35]Text and gloss, Amaravati 1950
[36]Baroda 1951
[37]Banaras 1950
[38]Kaladi 1955

which includes logic, psychology and ethics as dealt with by western writers, prompted a desire on the part of some to acquaint the Sanskrit reading circles with these subjects as understood in the West. We may notice here the results of this new line of literary activity. As early as the middle of the last century, the *Pandit*, Banaras, published Sanskrit translations of Berkeley's *Principles of Human Knowledge*[39] and Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*[40], and one Vitthal had rendered Bacon's *Novum Organum*[41]. Dr. Sama Sastri wrote in the *MSCMM.* (1929) accounts of modern western logic and psychology under the titles *Paschatya-pramana-tattva* and *Manasa-tattva*. One of the latest examples of this class is a thesis on ethics in western philosophy[42] produced by Visvesvara Siddhanta Siromani of Vrindavan.

MODERN SCIENCE

From the earliest stages, Sanskritists felt the need to bring modern scientific knowledge to those among them who did not study English. In this task the Sanskrit journals, the *Samskrita Chandrika* of Appa Sastri Rasivadekar, the *Sah.* etc. did good work. Under the title *Vijnanakusuma,* the *SC.* gave accounts of Sanskrit scientific writing (*e.g. 'Pracham-bhugola-vijnanam', Jyotistattavam,* etc.). As early as 1823 and 1828 Ilattur Ramaswami Sastri and Yogadhyana Misra wrote two *Kshetra-tattva-dipikas* on geometry. The *Sah.* published articles, some with drawings, on several branches of modern science, Physics, Chemistry, Astronomy, Botany (NS. : Vols. II ff) under headings like *Paschatya-sastrasara* (Substance of Western Science). Appa Sastri wrote on Astronomy. C. Venkataramanayya of Mysore gave a resume of the scientific knowledge of Ancient Indian writers, *Sanatana-bhautika-vijnana* (Mysore 1939). Vitthala Sastri wrote on the chemistry of the five elements accepted in Hindu Sastras in his *Pancha-bhuta-vadartha* (Banaras 1859). From Bangalore and Mysore appeared also elaborate separate treatises like the *Amsubodhinisastra* on Physics ascribed to sage Bharadvaja and other ancient sages. While dealing with scientific subjects,

[39] *Jnanasiddhantachandrika, Pandit, OS,* VIII, IX, X

[40] *Vidvadvara-Lokhabhidha-virachita Manaviya-jnana-vishayaka-sastra, Pandit, OS,* X

[41] *Bekaniya-sutra-vyakhyana,* Banaras 1852. For some more works of this type, see *Bull. R. K. M. Inst. of Culture,* June 1956, pp. 133-4.

[42] *Niti Sastra,* in manuscript

we might notice also the poem in one hundred and sixty verses called *Manavaprajapatiyam* (Man as Creator, *SSPP*. Feb. 1947 ff) in which Ravindra Kumara Sarma depicts the ultimate failure of science; he makes a brilliant young Indian go to Germany, specialise in science, come back, desire to manufacture a real woman who would come up to his expectations, proceed with the creation step by step, make the woman, infuse life and motion in her and finally come to grief suddenly. In the Weekly called *Samskritam* (of 20. 3. 1956 and 17. 4. 1956), Vamsigopala Sastri (Rajputana) has two scientific short stories, both very well written, *Chetanam kva aste* (Where is the principle of life?) and *Sukralokayatra* (Journey to Venus); the former is on the failure of science to discover the secret of life. In a short dramatic skit on King Parikshit and the Kali Age, in the *Dungar College Patrika*, Vidyadhara Sastri makes the Kali Age, which fails to enter the world in the presence of Sage Suka and King Parikshit, call Modern Science and Politics to help his entry and conquest. In astronomy, astrology and Ayurveda, works are being produced in Sanskrit. Kaviraj Gananath Sen wrote the *Pratyakshasarira* on anatomy (Calcutta 1919), and the *Siddhantanidana* on pathology (1922) and Bhudeva Mukherji the *Rasajalanidhi* on Hindu chemistry 1926; Ayurvedic doctors of Malabar and Tamilnad also wrote similar works, e. g. P.S. Varier; V. N. Nair wrote the *Anugraha-mimamsa* on the germ-theory (Calicut 1938); Nataraja Sastri of Tiruchi has written a Sanskrit work on the Tamil Ayurvedic school called *Siddha-vaidya;* in the *Svasthyavritta* (Bombay 1954) Messrs K. S. Mhaskar and N. S. Watve deal with health and longevity; and C. G. Kashikar, Poona, has dealt with the whole background of Ayurveda in his *Ayurvediya-padarthavijnana* (1953). Subjects of economics and commerce, agriculture and animal husbandry are dealt with by P. S. Subbarama Pattar in his short work *Varta* (Trichur 1954). In archaeology, Kedarnath Sastri has produced a book on Indus Valley Civilization, the *Sindhu-sabhyata*; Pt. Kulabhushana has published an article on the same subject in *Sri*, the Journal of the Sanskrita Sahitya Parishat, Srinagar (VI. iii-iv).

Sanskrit Periodicals

In the first flush of enthusiasm which energised the Sanskritists, the primary need that they felt was the starting of Sanskrit

periodicals. A survey of Sanskrit journals is indeed a revelation; not only have there been numerous journals, but these journals have carried such varied contributions that they might well be credited with having played an important part in infusing a fresh life into Sanskrit. Next to the *Pandit* of Banaras, the honour of pioneering effort in this line goes to the *Samskrita Chandrika* and the *Sunritavadini* (first started as a weekly) of Kolhapur with which Appa Sastri Rasivadekar was actively associated. Periodicals connected with Banaras, some of which are not now alive, are the *Mitragoshthi*, the *Vallari*, the *Suryodaya* (organ of the Bharata Dharma Mahamandal), the *Suprabhatam* (of the Kasi Vidvan Mandala), the *Samskritaratnakara* (of the Samskrita Sahitya Sammelan) and the *Pandita Patrika* of the All-India Pandita Parishat; two other journals were also started in Banaras, *Suktisudha* and *Vidyaratnakara*. The *Vidyodaya* was started by Hrishikesa Bhattacharya from Lahore; the Arya Samaj started the *Aryasiddhanta* (Allahabad), and the Brahmo Samaj the *Srutaprakasika* (Calcutta). Among journals started in South India, the pride of place should go to the *Sahridaya* (Srirangam) which was keeping a high standard, and with which were editorially associated two gifted writers R. Krishnamachariar and R. V. Krishnamachariar. Its place may be said to have been taken by the *Udyanapatrika* from Tiruvayyaru edited by D. T. Tatacharya. The *Manjubhashini* was appearing from Kanchipuram, the *Brahma Vidya* from Chidambaram and the *Vichakshana* from Sriperumbudur. The *Amritavani* of Ramakrishna Bhat from Bangalore is now stopped but the *Madhuravani* from Northern Karnataka is continuing and is keeping its standard. Different regions had Sanskrit journals with supplements in local languages : the *Kavyakalpadruma* in Sanskrit-Kannada from Bangalore (1897), the *Dvaibhashika* from Bengal, the *Bharatadivakara* from Gujarat, the *Mithilamoda* from Bihar, the *Bahusruta* from Wardha. There were also Anglo-Sanskrit journals, the *Lokanandadipika* from Madras, the '*Sanskrit Journal*' from Pudukottah, and the *Samskritabharati* from Burdwan. The Patrika being issued by K. M. Munshi's Samskrita Visva Parishat carries English and Sanskrit material. In the numerous multilingual college magazines also, there appear original Sanskrit contributions. Among journals that have had an unbroken record must be mentioned the *Samskrita Sahitya Parishat Patrika*, Calcutta; from the same centre, K. C.

Chatterji is carrying on his *Manjusha*. The Sanskrit Colleges at different centres started their own Sanskrit magazines: The Pattambi Sanskrit College had the *Vijnanachintamani* which Punnasseri Nilakantha Sarma was editing. The Maharajah's Sanskrit College at Trivandrum was publishing for some years the *Sri Chitra* and that at Mysore is still issuing its journal. The Sarasvati Bhavan and Banaras Sanskrit College are now issuing a high-class periodical called the *Sarasvati Sushama*. From distant Hyderabad (Sind) we were getting the *Kaumudi*. The Bihar Sanskrit Academy published the *Samskrita Samjivanam*. The *Samskrita* (Weekly) and *Samskrita Saketa* issue from Ayodhya. In the place of the *Samskritaratnakara* appearing from Jaipur, we have now the *Bharati* from that place. In Simla, a new journal has been started, the *Divyajyotis*. The *Surabharati* appears from Darbhanga. The Sanskrit Vidvat Sabha, Baroda, is bringing out the *Sarasvati-saurabha*. The Sanskrita Sahitya Parishat, Srinagar, has been publishing for some years a quarterly organ called *Sri* which specialised in essays. Special mention must be made of the weekly *Samskrita Bhavitavyam* of the Samskrita Pracharini Sabha, Nagpur, which is good in the material presented and the style employed. Some of the other journals, now no longer functioning, are the *Pratna-Kamra-nandini*, the *Vidvatkala*, the *Samskrita Bharati*, the *Samskrita Mahamandala* and *Samskrita Padyavani* of Calcutta, the *Samskrita Bhaskara* (Muttra), the *Samskrita Kadambini*, the *Vidyodaya* (Bharatpur), the *Amritabharati* (Cochin), the *Amarabharati* (Banaras), *Achyuta* (Banaras), the *Sarada* (Allahabad), the *Venkatesvara Patrika* (Madras), the *Usha* and the *Aryaprabha*. In one of the 1914 issues of the *Samskrita Ratnakara* (Jaipur) there is an interesting dramatic dialogue among the Sanskrit journals: The *Ratnakara*, the *Vijnana Chintamani*, the *Manjubhashini*, the *Sahridaya*, the *Usha*, the *Sarada*, the *Aryaprabha* and the *Vidyodaya* are made to meet and exchange views.

Apart from publishing minor poems, short stories, serial longer stories and novels, these journals freely discussed in essays and editorial notes every contemporary event, social question, fresh reform and change: all these subjects have been discussed in a simple style of prose with emphasis on matter, in the growth of which these papers have been greatly instrumental. The following random samples from different journals will give an idea of the subjects that these Sanskrit periodicals discussed:

Education in Germany, the rickshaw and plea for relief to its poor puller, the decrease of the cattle wealth of India, birth control, the danger of impending famine, the lot of the Kisan, the set-up of education needed now, the evil of the examination system, Indians and the European War, the peaceful uses of atomic energy, Nationalism and Internationalism, Hindu law reforms. They carry also brief news-items and jokes and tit-bits. They of course do not fail to devote space to discuss questions bearing on the promotion of Sanskrit; among these figure also some of the subjects which are now spoken and written upon frequently—Sanskrit as a national language, simplification of Sanskrit, uniformity of Sanskrit education, methods of Sanskrit teaching, greatness of Sanskrit, present plight of Sanskrit, a Sanskrit University and so on. The Dravidian movement and the Christian propaganda are also dealt with. By writing in the common language about personalities and note-worthy contributions in regional languages, the journals play the role of inter-State liaison and promote understanding and unity in the country.

Essay

Following the article in the periodical, the essay, as a form, was also separately developed. The growth of this form was also helped by the need for fresh prose texts for different school and college classes. We may notice especially two writers who have brought out books of essays, Mr. Hamsraj Agarwal and Srutikanta Sarma. In the *Samskritaprabandha-pradipa* (Ludhiana 1955) of the former, there are essays on such modern topics as recent scientific advancements, the Kashmir question, the food situation, four years of Independence, constitutions of the leading countries of the world, the future of Sanskrit, the Hindu Code Bill, the future of India and the method of teaching Sanskrit. The subjects dealt with by the latter in his *Laghunibandhamanimala* (Ludhiana 1955) include some lighter themes—the hookah, a dialogue between a horse and a cycle, football match, third-class railway travel, secular State, U. N. O., elections and friendships, talkies, the joy of aimless wandering, the picnic, hobby, the sportsman's spirit, etc. The *Prabandhaparijata* is a collection of essays on old and modern subjects, from diverse hands, brought out recently by the Chamarajendra Sanskrit

College, Bangalore (1958); among modern topics dealt with here are *Panchasila*, *Greater Mysore*, *Birth-Control*, *U.N.O.*, *Rani Lakshmi Bai*, *Tilak*, *Gandhi*, etc. The *Galpakusumanjali* is another collection of essays on historical subjects.

The form called *Letters* has not developed, though here again Appa Sastri had pioneered, as some of his letters published show.

Travelogue

Travel has figured in ancient Sanskrit literature, especially as pilgrimage. In modern times also, some works of this class have been produced. Mm. T. Ganapati Sastri's *Setuyatravarnana*, though couched in traditional style, deals with Hindu ideals and has reference to many contemporary details and social evils. The *Tribilvadala Champu*[43] of V. S. Ramaswami Sastri, a lawyer of Madurai, is on the author's all-India tour and pilgrimage and describes in addition to sacred places, all objects of interest to modern man like universities, public buildings, archaeological sites, etc. Sakharam Sastri wrote an account of his travels in Konkan[44] in 1924. In the journal *Sri*, there appeared accounts of excursions to Amaranatha (V. iv), to the countryside and a serial called *Sarasvatī-yātrā* which touched on places and matters of historical, geographical and cultural interest. The same journal has a *Simla-varnana* in X, iii, iv. S.P. Bhattacharya's *Uttarakhandayatra*[45] is on his pilgrimage to the Himalayan shrines. Dr. B. Ch. Chabbra's *Nyaktarajanapadasobha*[46] is a description of Holland where the author spent some time. Dr. Kunhan Raja who was Professor of Sanskrit at Teheran described Persepolis in a poem (*Adyar Library Bulletin*, December 1953). Recently Mr. Ramakrishna Bhat, who was editing the Sanskrit journal *Amritavani* from Bangalore and went to East Africa for some time, has written about the latter country and his experiences there in the form of a long letter published in the *Samskrita Bhavitavyam*[46a].

Literary Criticism

Literary Criticism had extensive growth in Sanskrit in the

[43] Madura 1937
[44] See *Oriental Literary Digest*, Poona, II, p. 165.
[45] Calcutta 1948
[46] *AV*. Bangalore 1953.
[46a] Mr. Bhat has also given in Sanskrit an African story in the same journal (26-6-1956).

Alankara Sastra. After English education, the application of western canons of criticism, of characterisation, style and the exposition of the message of the poet became common; it was felt that there was a need to develop in Sanskrit also the critical literary appreciation in the form of the long prose essay common in western literature. The Sanskrit journals published many articles in this line but the initiative to publish books in this specific form goes to Mr. R. Krishnamacharya who was editing the *Sah.*; he brought out in monograph form the *Raghuvamsavimarsa*[47] and the *Meghasandesavimarsa*[48]. A. V. Gopalacharya, Tiruchirapalli, has specialised in this kind of literary exposition, one of his works of this class being the *Sandesadvaya-sarasvadini*, a detailed comparative study of the *Meghasandesa* and the *Hamsasandesa*. The Madras Sanskrit Academy has been celebrating Sanskrit Poets' Day for the past thirty years and encouraging the writing and reading of critical appreciations of Sanskrit poets and dramatists[49].

Short Story

It is perhaps in the short story that one might notice prominently the new developments coming over Sanskrit. The short story as such is not new to Sanskrit but the form in which it is now handled, Sanskrit owes to the West. From the dawn of the modern period, short stories of the new type were appearing in the Sanskrit periodicals; their number has now increased and short story competitions held in Nagpur[49a] and Madras show that there are numerous writers in Sanskrit who could do justice to this modern form.

Before taking up the actual modern short story, writers felt the need to give as reading material to Sanskrit students simple elegant prose narratives, and for this purpose produced a good deal of story literature. They retold Puranic episodes and collected in Sanskrit numerous fables and popular tales. S. Venkatarama Sastri's *Hundred Popular Tales and Fables in Prose* (Madras 1898), Svetaranyam Narayana Yajvan's *Gadya Kavya* containing prose stories including two imaginative pieces (*Sukumaravarman* and

[47-48] Kavyagunadarsa Series, Srirangam 1908, 1915

[49] Several of the papers so read have been published in the *Journal of Oriental Research*, Madras.

[49a] Eight of the stories of the Nagpur competition are published in a special issue of the *Samskrita Bhavitavyam* brought out on 24-4-1954.

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Mahamoda), P. Sivarama Sastri's *Charitraratnavali*[50] in two parts on subjects from classical works and epics and Puranas, *Visvamitra* in prose by N. Nilakantha Pillai (Trivandrum 1936), *Parasurama Charita* by Venkatarama Sastri (*UP.*, Tiruvayyaru 1934), *Samskrita gadyavali*[51] by P. V. Kane, *Katharatnakara*, prose stories by M. K. Tirunarayana Iyengar (Bangalore 1910), *Arjuna* and other accounts by M. Ramakrishna Bhat (Bangalore 1953) are examples of this class. An effort was made to present classical Sanskrit works themselves in easy prose. On the one hand, prose works like those of Bana and Subandhu were pruned and presented in easy, abridged versions by R. V. Krishnamachariar, Mm. V. V. Mirashi, V. V. Sarma and others. On the other, the stories of Sanskrit dramas of Bhasa, Kalidasa and others were presented in prose narrative form by V. Anantacharya, Y. Mahalinga Sastri, K. L. V. Sastri and Kailasanatha.

Of early stories published in the *Sah.*, *Sadhumani* on a poor sweetmeat vendor on the Ganges bank by K. Srinivasan is really touching and is narrated very well. Among those published in the *SSPP.* are *Lila* by Bhavabhuti Vidyaratna (1923-24), *Pushpanjali* by Taranikanta Chakravarti (1924-25), *Aindrajalika* (May 1932), *Rasamayi* (1933-34), *Bhaminya madanatapa* on the young wife of an old man (May 1955) by K. R. Sankaranarayana Sastri, and *I.C.S. Son-in-law* by R. Rangachari may be mentioned. *Whose fault is it*? (*Kasyayam aparadhah*) by P. V. Varadaraja Sarma (*SSPP.* April 1937) is to be singled out from these as a piece in perfect technique, displaying capacity for graphic presentation; the plot is the common social evil of poverty and continued adversity leading people to vice. In *SSPP.* (May 1937) Rangacharya has a skit, *Nagaraparipalana Sabha*, in which an aged woman is set up for a municipal council. In one of the older issues of *SSPP.* (1928-29), there is a skit by Venudhara Tarkatirtha; writing a travel-story, the author finds himself, in a dream, journeying in the city of Yama, the God of Death (*Yamapuri-paryatana*) but his sojourn is cut short by a sudden dilemma of King Yama whether his jurisdiction is only over Hindus or includes the Mlecchas and the Indian visitor is sent back to his country to convene a Pandita parishat and settle the question[52]

[50]Kumbhakonam 1922, 1924
[51]Macmillans
[52]A contribution called *Yamarajavichara* appeared in the journal *Vidyodaya*.

The following stories published in *SR.* (1909-1948) may be mentioned : *Pasyatoharah*, *Duhkhini Bala*, *Asamasahasa*, *Arvachinasabhyata* (about modern civilization), *Nirasapranaya*, *Sarala*, *Sakshi*, *Adarsadampati* (Ideal couple), *Ayam eva premaparipakah* (This is mature love), *Karuna*, *Varepsu-vatuka-samvada* (dialogue between the would-be father-in-law and the bachelor), and *Nyayadhikari*. From the *SR.* two stories could be mentioned : In one, appearing in the 1945 volume, the writer tries to bring out the lesson that the peace and happiness of women cannot be had by pursuing more and more the shadows and glamours of modern life; in another, in the issue for June 1947, *Dhanyo'yam pariksha-yugah*, it is shown that real knowledge cannot be promoted by the examination system. Some of these contributions are in the form of skits. The *Kaumudi* from Hyderabad (Sind) published *Visakha* and *Pramoda-griham* by Rama Dvivedi (1944, 1945) and a story on the evil of the dowry system, *Yautaka* by Visveswar Dayal. How a black-marketeer outwitted a cat is told well in *Marjara Charitra* by K. C. Chatterji in the *Manj.* (Oct. 1953). Mrs. Kshama Rao published in 1953 five short stories in her usual Anushtubh verses; these were first written in English and put into Sanskrit later; her themes are often on topics of social reform, child marriage, early widowhood, etc. Posthumously a collection of fifteen stories of hers has been issued in a volume called *Kathamuktavali* (Bombay 1954), one of her older verse stories reappearing here in prose; her *Gramajyotis* presents three stories of Gujarat villages during civil disobedience days. In the *Samskrita* (June 1957), a historical sketch, entitled *Gahula*, of the Hun period in Indian history is narrated effectively.

In the *Sarvajana-samskrita-mala*, intended to give easy prose reading material in Sanskrit, A. Krishna Somayaji, has given a story of Tolstoy in Sanskrit *Kano luptah griham dahati* (Guntur 1954). Aesop's Fables has been translated by more than one Sanskrit writer.

Novel

We may now notice a class of writings which can be definitely called modern and shaped by western influence, the novel. Here again we can see the transition from a background and theme like that of the *Kadambari* to a social milieu. This class has been enriched in all the three ways, translations, adaptations and original productions. Appa Sastri rendered Bankim

Chandra's *Lavanyamayi*, first published in his journal *Samskrita Chandrika*[53] and then issued repeatedly as a separate book; the *Kapalakundala*[54] of the same celebrated Bengali novelist was translated by Hari Charan. Among other works of Appa Sastri which appeared in his *SC.* are *Krishnakantasya Nirvana* and *Indira* narrated autobiographically by the heroine. Of fiction of other writers published in *SC.* are *Mrittikavrishabhakatha* of Narasimhacharya Punekar and *Viyogini Bala* by Balabhadra Sarma. Upendranath Sen wrote the *Pallicchavi*, the *Makarandika* and the *Kundamala*. Haridasa Siddhanta Vagisa wrote a novel called *Sarala*[55]. A. Rajagopala Chakravarti's *Saivalini*[56] is an adaptation of another Bengali novel; the same author wrote two other novels also, *Kumudini* and *Vilasakumari Sangara*. Chintamani Madhava Gole wrote the *Madanalatika* (Bombay 1911). Several longer stories and romantic tales and novelettes have appeared serially in the pages of the different Sanskrit journals: in the *Sah.* (III) appeared *Kanakalata* by Kalyanarama Sastri; written in fine prose, it is a romance in ninety pages, based on Shakespeare's *Lucrece*; *Atirupa* (III) by Gopala Sastri; *Vijayini* (IV) by Parasurama Sarma; *Simantini* (VII) by Narayana Sastri, *Kamalakumari* and *Sati Kamala* (IX) by Chidambara Sastri and *Susila* (XI) by the gifted editor R. Krishnamachariar.

The following were published in *SSPP*: *Rajani* by Renudevi (1928-29), *Radha, Durgesanandini* (1922-23) and *Radharani* (1930-31) were translations from Bankim's Bengali works. In the same journal appeared also a novel entitled *Datta* (Oct. 1935 ff). In the *Madhuravani*, the editor, G. Ramacharya, serialised the story *Devi Vasanti*. In the *MSCMM.*, N. Narasimhachari wrote the romance *Kirtisena* using a heroic theme (1948-49). The *Mandaravati* of K. Krishnamacharya (Madras 1929) is based on one of the stories in the *Brihatkathamanjari*. Srisaila Tatacharya (died 1925) also took up Bengali novels for translation, two of his productions being *Durgesanandini* and *Kshatriyaramani*. Kavyakantham Ganapati Sastri wrote the novel *Purna*[57]. Vidhusekhar who edited

[53]Wai 1907, Dharwar 1920, Banaras 1947. Among his other prose works are *Devi Kumudvati*, *Dasaparinati* and *Matribhakti*.

[54]Calcutta 1926

[55]For this and other writings of this author, see *Classical Skt. Lit.*, Krishnamacharya, p. 673.

[56]Mysore 1917

[57]See p. 11, Introduction to his *Umasahasra*.

the *Mitragoshthi* from Banaras wrote the romance *Chandraprabha*. Medhavrata wrote the novel called *Kumudini Chandra* (Yeole 1920). Mr. Narasimhacharya who commanded an elegant, graphic and poetic style wrote a novel (*Navinakriti*, Madras 1934) called *Saudamani*. The *Simasamsaya* (*Manj*. Nov. 1950 ff.) is a new novel by Gangopadhyaya featuring a leftist youth. Among longer stories using historical episodes are *Vangavira Pratapaditya* by Devendranath Chattopadhyaya (*SSPP*. 1930-31), *Gaurachandra* by Indranath Vandyopadhyaya (*SSPP*. 1932-33) and the *Viralabdham Paritoshikam* by R. Ramamurti from Chola history (*UP*. 1955). Some examples of short stories on historical episodes may also be noted here: *Viramati* (*SR*. 1909), *Atyacharinah Parinamah* (on the consequences of excess based on an episode of the Muslim period, *SR*. 1942), and *Dani Dines* (*SR*. 1943). The Weekly *Samskritam* published some good historical short stories, *Ajanta* (27. 3. 1956), *Hiru* (17. 1. 1956 ff), *Dvirasvamedhayaji* (27. 12. 1955) etc. *Chandramauli* of A. Rajammal, Madras, uses an old type of theme and introduces also a drama into the story. D. T. Tatacharya has rendered the Tamil novel *Menaka* by Vaduvur Duraiswami Iyengar and the version is appearing in the *UP*. Sri Jagadrama Sastri, Hoshiarpur, has produced a prose fiction in his *Chatrasalavijaya*.

MINOR POEM

Another characteristic feature of modern Indian writings is the new life which the minor poem assumed. Classical Sanskrit has the tradition of Muktakas, Yugmakas, Kalapakas, Kulakas and Satakas but after the model of the western minor poem which deals with specific ideas and subjects within the compass of a limited number of verses, the modern Sanskrit writer produced a volume of poetry, which is perhaps the most common form in which Sanskrit poets are today expressing themselves. Some writers have published collections of their minor poems, but the bulk of the production in this category is either in the magazines or buried in manuscript. The writings include translations and adaptations from English literature. Mr. Ramachandracharya's *Laghukavyamala* (Madras 1924) comprises translations: *Purushadasasaptaka* on the seven stages of man (from *As You like It*), *Sumanoratha* (from Roger's *A Wish*), *Piturupadesa* (from *Hamlet*) and *Sadhuvadamanjari* (from Browning's *All's*

Right with the World). The *Kinkinimala* of Y. Mahalinga Sastri (Madras 1934) includes, besides renderings from Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Shelley and Dr. Johnson, many new minor poems in some of which new metres based on musical rhythm are adopted, e.g. in the most striking piece *Sthanuparidevana* (on the woes of Lord Siva). The *Padyapushpanjali* of V. Subrahmanya Iyer (Madurai 1951) has both original pieces and renderings from English; among the former are lines on Rishis, Poetry, Life, Nature and Art, Sakuntala's soliloquy, Wonderful India, etc. The *Prakriti Vilasa* of Mm. K. S. Krishnamurti Sastri (Madurai 1950) includes several descriptions of Nature. The *Kakali* of Jatindra Nath Bhattacharya (Calcutta 1933) has, besides traditional poems and hymns, two short eulogies on Gandhi and Tagore. The *Sushama* of Prof. G. C. Jhala (Bombay 1955) is a short collection which includes satires, elegies and descriptive verses. The *Suvarnabindu* of Dr. B. Ch. Chhabra (1951, cyclostyled) contains some noteworthy pieces; one on the ant, and another on true friends as the greatest blessing of life; the poem on Gandhiji here is also to be noted for the Vedic Gayatri metre it employs ; that on Mathura has references to the cultural associations of the place disclosed by literature and the archaeological excavations. S. B. Varnekar's *Mandormimala* (Pardi 1956) includes several descriptive, reflective, didactic and patriotic pieces. Mathuranatha Kavi Sastri of Jaipur has not left any modern object or development untouched in his minor poems, a collection of which could be seen in his big volume *Sahityavaibhava* (Bombay 1930); the first part of this volume has specimens of Nature-poetry, then pieces depicting various emotions, then reflective *Anyapadesa* verses and then a section called *Navayuga-vithi* (Section on the New Age) in which the poet describes the tram, the motor-car, the railway, the ship, electricity, radio, gramophone, surgery, X-ray, photography, cinema, the greatness of science, the merits of the westerners, etc. His poems include reflections on Indian public affairs also.

Among the numerous imitations of the *Meghasandesa* only a few out-of-the-way specimens can be noted here: there have been efforts to reconstruct the Yaksha's life at Alaka, his office, cause of curse, etc. (*Meghapratisandesa* by M. Rama Sastri, Mysore 1923); earlier, Korada Ramachandra Kavi wrote the

Ghanavritta (Madras 1955), a sequel to Kalidasa's work. Parodies of the *Meghasandesa* are noted in another section.

Some examples of poems appearing in the journals should be cited to show the range of subjects touched in this class: In the *Sah.* (II), K. Kalyani wrote the *Bharativilapa* on the woes of an author, in writing, getting printed, reviewed, read and enjoyed. The *Bharatiya Yuddhasajja* (*SSPP.* Oct 1942) is a metrical dialogue on ancient and modern warfare, prompted by India's last war effort. *Charma-golaka-Krida* by Pulinavihari Dasgupta (*SSPP.* 1928-29) is on Football. Kukke Subrahmanya Sastri has a poem on the Jog falls in the *MSCMM.* (1925). Appa Sarma wrote also fine verses as seen in his poem on the parrot in the cage, *Panjara-baddhah Sukah* (*SC.* 1904), and his translation of the *Deserted Village* (*SC.*, also separately issued, Dharwar 1915).

Short poems of varying lengths on a single continuous story have also been published. *Mahipo Manuniti Cholah* (1949) and *Devabandi Varadarajah* (1948) by the present writer present anecdotes from the annals of Chola history and the Srirangam Temple. In an unpublished poem of the writer, entitled *Na kadachid anidrisam jagat* (The world was never unlike this), the first sequence presents the story of the heartless abandonment of Pururavas by Urvasi in Vedic times and the second, the story of how an Indian Prince is abandoned by an English wife after relieving him of a huge fortune.

On Sanskrit language and its greatness, several short poems have appeared in the pages of journals; a separate longer poem in hundred and six verses on this theme is Prabhu Datta Sastri's *Samskrita-vak-saundaryamritam* (Delhi 1957).

Slightly longer poems of the older Khanda-kavya type have been written, and in some of them the theme is treated in a fresh manner. The *Kavya-samudaya* of C. Venkataramanayya (Bangalore 1944) deals in this way with the Vedic stories of Harischandra, Nabhanedishtha and Visvamitra. The *Dhara-yaso-dharah* of D. M. Kulkarni (Satara 1952) is a peom on the glories of one of the historic cultural centres of ancient India, the capital of Bhoja. The *Padmini-chandra-samvada* of V. Venkatanarayanaraya of Vizianagaram (Banaras 1909) is a dialogue on character. Medhasri Narayana Sastri, Tiruvayyaru, has, among his numerous works, a gnomic work on the four-fold goal of life, the *Chaturvargachintamani* (Srirangam

1922). The old class of Anyapadesa-satakas is really an effective medium for reflective poetry and several modern Sanskritists have composed verses of this type also. Mathuranatha Sastri's *Anyapadesas* were referred to. Y. Mahalinga Sastri's *Vyajoktiratnavali* (Tiruvayyaru 1953) belongs to this class. Special mention is due for the *Jitamala Carita* of Sukadeva Sastri of Jammu (Ptd. Lahore); here, in eight short cantos, the author narrates the tragic story of the poor Brahman Baba Jitto and his daughter, well known in Dogra bardic lays. The Buddhistic story of Upagupta and Vasavadatta is the theme of the *Netronmilana* in three cantos by Y. Nagesa Sarma (Bangalore 1955) who bases himself here on the Hindi prose work on the story.

Satire and Light Verse

Satire and light verses are also a line of writing which has received fresh impetus in the present age. While modern-minded writers have held the traditional type to ridicule, the latter has also returned the compliments; several modern fashions and foibles have come in handy for the latter. The wide variety of views and quarrels and bickerings of diverse parties and leaders have also supplied material for skits and satires. This is a class of writing in which one sees a lively employment of Sanskrit.

A few modern writers have used the form of the *Meghasandesa* for writing humorous poems. Examples of such parody are *Kakaduta* of C. R. Sahasrabuddhe (Dharwar 1917), the *Kakaduta*[58] of M. R. Rajagopala Iyengar, a message sent by a thief in gaol and *Sunakaduta*[59] by K. V. Krishnamurti Sastri, Poona, in which again a thief clapped in gaol pleads with a dog to go as a messenger to his beloved. The taste of the onion is too strong to be resisted and in *Sah. VIII*, Muddu Vitthalacharya puts in a plea to the orthodox on behalf of this tabooed delicacy (*Palanduprarthana*); Krishnarama of Jaipur has a whole century on this precious thing (*Palandusataka*). On the noble role of the broomstick, there is a eulogy called *Marjani* and in a whole century again, Anantalwar, later Pontiff at the Melkote Srivaishnava Math, expatiates on the glory of the broomstick[60].

[58] *Annamalainagar Miscellany*, 1940

[59] *Sarasvati Sushama*, Banaras 1956

[60] *Sammarjanisataka*, Mysore. The *Samskrita Chandrika*, Vol. 5, has an essay on the broomstick (p. 7 ff).

The bug and the ant have not escaped the poets : K. V. Krishnamurti Sastri, Poona, has a *Matkunashtaka*, eight verses on the bug, in the *SR.* and the bug, which is equally a nuisance in Bengal as in Poona, gets an *ashtaka* from Pulinavihari Dasgupta in the *SSPP.* (Feb. 1928, *Matkunashtaka*). The greater menace *Masaka*, the mosquito, has been honoured even in ancient Sanskrit poetry; in contemporary writings, Atreya (V. Swaminatha Sarma) has hummed some lines on it[61]. The pleasures of tea and coffee or the evil of addiction to them have inspired several lines of poetry. C.R. Sahasrabuddhe has elevated Tea to be worthy of a Gita, (*Chaha-gita*, Dharwar). Atreya expatiates on coffee in sixteen verses (*Kaphishodasika*)[62] and two other poems on it have really been hard on this wonderful beverage : M.V. Sampatkumar Acharya's *Kaphi-paniyam* (*SSPP.* April 1941) and the *Kaphi-tyaga-dvadasa-manjarika*; the latter harnesses the metre and association of Sankaracharya's *Bhaja Govindam* to appeal to people to give up coffee. From this, it is indeed refreshing to turn to the Cup of Tea, a poem in seven verses, by M. Krishnan Nambudripad of Karikkad (*Samskrita* of 3-4-1956). Appa Sarma wrote a panygeric on the stomach, the *Udaraprasasti* (*SC.* 1906). In an originally conceived poem, *Kapinam upavasah*[63] (Fast of the Monkeys), D. T. Tatacharya has a hit against the fickle-minded people who pretend to observe austerities. The *Kanyakubjalilamrita* in 38 verses by Mahavira Prasad Dvivedin lampoons Kanauj Brahmins (*SC.* Vol. VI).

Satires have also been written on some of the new movements, their leaders and protagonists. Dayananda is satirized by Chajju Rama in the *Dayanandashtaka.* Bankim Chandra Chatterji's satire on the modern conferences in the story of the congress of animals has been rendered into Sanskrit[64]. In hundred verses, Punnasseri Nilakantha Sarma has a go at the early political agitators in his *Sattvikasvapna* (M.E. 1097, Trichur) : the shouting of diverse slogans and ideologies by different parties are made fun of here in the form of a regular conference of a bull, a dog, a monkey, a fox, a parrot and so on, with welcome speech, opening speech, presidential address, and so on. The *Congress*,

[61] *Annamalainagar Miscellany* 1940
[62] *Ibid.*
[63] Kumbhakonam 1925
[64] *Sah. NS.* II

Gita (Madras 1908) is a satire on the stormy Surat Congress. Those who had taken to fashionable modern habits and left off the traditional *acharas* are satirized by Baba Dikshita Vatave in his *Kalpita-Kali-vrittantadarsa-purana*.

DRAMA

Of the serious drama, the traditional type on old themes has been produced in large numbers and it is enough to indicate here that there have been writers like Bhattasri Narayana Sastri who had written ninety-three plays and that to this day such plays are being regularly composed. Special mention must however be made here of such plays which, while taking the traditional form or theme, yet work in many a new feature in form, treatment and ideas. Naturally, this could not be avoided when a modern educated Sanskritist begins to write drama in Sanskrit[65].

The classical masterpieces themselves have suggested fresh themes or attempts at dramatic reconstructions of situations implied in the classical plays. For example, Jaggu Vakulabhushana of Mysore has essayed on the last mentioned line and produced short plays in two or three acts, among which may be mentioned the *Prasanna-Kasyapiya* (Mysore 1951) in which Dushyanta and Sakuntala, along with young Bharata, pay a visit to Kanva's Asrama. The same fascinating theme has engaged also J. T. Parikh of Surat who has a one-act piece on it, the *Chaya-Sakuntala* (Surat 1957), in which the influence of the Uttararamacarita is also patent. Allegorical plays were also written, e.g. *Adharma-vipaka* (*SC.* Vol. V). C. Venkataramanayya composed a long allegorical play *Jivasanjivani Nataka*[66] bringing out the value of Ayurveda.

The Madras Sanskrit Academy held an all-India Drama Competition which met with very good response: the honours of the contest went to a drama called *Pratirajasuyam*, just now published, by Y. Mahalinga Sastri, on the theme of a counter-Rajasuya sacrifice which Duryodhana performs after sending his cousins into exile; here as well as in other unpublished plays of his on old themes, like the *Udgatrdasanana*, the author introduces modern ideas. His *Kalipradurbhava*, just published[67], deals

[65]A notable change that has occurred is that Prakrit is generally avoided.
[66]Bangalore 1949
[67]Serialised in the *UP.* and issued separately, Tiruvalangadu 1956

in seven short acts with the old but entertaining story of the immediate demoralisation which the Kali-age causes even as it is coming. The *Ubhayarupaka* of the same author is a social comedy. Sundaresa Sarma of Tanjore takes a romantic theme, a replica of the Bilhana story, in his *Prema-vijaya* (Triumph of Love)[68] which the author has also put on boards.

The first change in theme is seen in the increasing number of plays on famous personalities in Indian history; in this class we have Mm. Mathuri Prasad Dikshita's on Rana Pratap Singh of Mewar (*Virapratapa Nataka*, Lahore 1937), M. M. Yajnik's three plays *Samyogita-svayamvara*, *Chhatrapatisamrajya* and *Pratapa-vijaya*[69], all provided with songs, Sudarsana Pathi's *Simhalavijaya*[70] on an episode of Orissan history, fitted with Orissan songs, and Panchanana Tarkaratna's *Amaramangala* (Banaras 1939). *Premamohini-Ranadhira* is a romantic play by Vijayananda(*SC.* 1904); it discards the traditional Prastavana. The *Anarkali*, in manuscript, of the present writer deals with Jehangir's well-known romance with the slave girl. Among the posthumous publications of Kshama Rao are some social reform plays, e. g. *Balavidhava*[71], in three acts, on the young widow. There have also been some out-of-the-way themes offered in dramatic form : The *Prakriti Saundarya* (Yeole 1934) of the Arya Samaj writer Mahavrata is on the beauty of Nature. The *Gairvanivijaya* of Punnesseri Nilakantha Sarma published in the journal *Vijnanachintamani* edited by him dramatises the sad state into which Sanskrit had fallen and the timely succour given by the starting of Maharajah's Sanskrit Colleges in different Princely States; here Brahma, Sarasvati and Rishis, Sanskrit, English and other Indian languages, are featured as characters. Prabhudatt Sastri of Delhi has a similar play called *Samskrita-vag-vijaya*[72] in five acts in Sanskrit and Hindi.

In the new upsurge of creative activity, Shakespeare claimed the attention of the votaries of Kalidasa, Sudraka and Bhavabhuti. There have been some surveys of Shakespeare in Indian languages but these take no note of the Sanskrit versions of the

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[68]Kumbhakonam 1943
[69]Published with English translations from Baroda, 1929 (*Chhatrapati-samrajya*)
[70]Berhampore 1951
[71]*Manj.*, 1955
[72]Delhi 1942

productions of this great dramatist.[73] As early as 1877 we had from Srisaila Dikshitar, Madras, the *Bhranti-vilasa*, a translation of *Comedy of Errors*. Rajaraja Varma of Trivandrum adapted *Othello*.[74] R. Krishnamacharya published in the pages of the *Sah.* and then separately as a book, *Vasantikasvapna*,[75] a rendering of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Sri Gunde Rao Harkare of Gadwal has translated *Midsummer Night's Dream* and some acts of *Hamlet*. Another translation of the Midsummer Night's Dream appeared in the *Sri* (VIII. iii-iv). *As You Like It* is now serially appearing in the pages of the *UP*. under the title *Yathabhimatam*. Lamb's *Tales From Shakespeare* has been put into Sanskrit by M. Venkataramanacharya of Vizianagaram[76]. The *Sah.* has also published in its different issues prose versions of the stories of Shakespearean plays, *Othello*, *Hamlet*, etc. Renderings of short passages and poems from Shakespeare have been already noticed. Other western dramas have also appeared in Sanskrit. Goethe's *Faust* has been done into a play called *Visvamohana*[77] in seven acts by S. N. Tadpatrikar, Poona. Dr. Shama Sastri rendered *Amelia Galetti* of Lessing in the *MSCMM*. (VII 1931). Tennyson's two-act tragedy *The Cup* is adapted to suit the Sanskrit dramatic tradition in the *Kamalavijayanataka*[78] of C. Venkataramanayya.

Next to these Sanskrit versions of western plays come the dramatic productions of shorter dimensions, particularly the one-act play which took fresh life from its western models. A good number of such plays have been produced in this period. The Sanskrit stage included the Farce or Prahasana from the earliest times and we have at least a couple of good specimens of this class coming down from the seventh century A. D. Among the short plays that arose recently, it is refreshing to see a number of *Prahasanas*. Occasions like the celebrations of the annual College Days which needed Sanskrit entertainments for a short duration gave an impetus to the growth of these short plays. In recent years the All-India Radio has also been responsible

[73]See e.g. *Aryan Path*, Nov. and Dec. 1955, C.R. Shah, Shakespearean Plays in Indian Languages.
[74]Printed Trivandrum
[75]Kumbhakonam 1892
[76]Madras 1933
[77]*Poona Orientalist*, XIV
[78]Mysore 1938

for giving a fillip to the growth of short Sanskrit plays and dramatic dialogues.

A variety of themes, all of contemporary and social interest, is to be seen in the new type of one-act plays: V. K. Thampi's *Three Plays in Sanskrit*[79] (*Pratikriya*, *Vanajyotsna*, *Dharmasya sukshma gatih*) take historical romantic themes of Rajput-Muslim times. *Kasyaham* (To whom do I belong) by P. V. Varadaraja Sarma (*SSPP.* 1939) is a daughter-in-law's monologue on her lot in the new home. *Manoharam Dinam* (Fine Day) by A. R. Hebare (*SSPP.* March 1941) is on that common incident in schools, the manoeuvring of the boys for the declaration of a holiday. Sita Devi dramatises domestic difficulties in her *Aranyarodana* (*Manorama*, Berhampore, No. 3, 1949 ff.). Another common experience in home and office is effectively dramatised in *Amarshamahima* (Sway of Temper, *AV.* 1951) by K. Tiruvenkatacharya; the irate officer falls foul of his wife and clerk, and the wave of bad temper passes from him to the clerk, from the clerk to his wife and from his wife to the servant-maid. An out-of-the-way theme is featured in *Vaniksuta* (Merchant's Daughter, *Manj.* Aug. 1955) by Surendramohana Panchatirtha; here a rich young widow is wooed by the votaries of Hinduism, and Buddhism, with the former coming out successful. Mrs. Kshama Rao's *Katuvipaka* (*Manj.* Dec 1955) handles one of those tragic happenings common during the Satyagraha days when the son or daughter joins the movement, breaks up the home and the parents' heart, or in the violence of the police, sacrifices his or her life. Presenting a later tragic phase through which the country passed, the one-act piece called *Maha-smasana* (The Huge Crematorium) is written with skill and power; in three brief scenes this short tragedy published in the *Kaumudi* (Hyderabad, Sind, Sep. 1944) presents the streets of Calcutta at the time of partition, strewn with corpses, a village of five hundred reduced to five, and a Muslim tailor's family faced with the alternative of dying by starvation or by taking gruel made of what has been obtained as rice in the black market, a mouthful of which kills the only surviving daughter.

Already in the *Snushavijaya*[80] (Triumph of the Daughter-in-law)

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[79] Trivandrum 1924

[80] Edited by the present writer with his own gloss in the *Annals of Oriental Research*, University of Madras VII, 1942-43

written by Ilattur Sundararaja Kavi in the latter part of the last century we find the one-act play on a social and domestic theme with an undercurrent of humour gaining vogue in Sanskrit. Of avowed farces in one or more acts, we have had several in the present century. One of the oldest of those to write a farce is S. K. Ramanatha Sastri; besides the *Dola-panchilaka Prahasana*, he dramatised also, under the caption *Manimanjusha*, the most interesting but bewildering material of the Apaharavarman story in Dandin's *Dasakumara-charita*[81]. K. L. V. Sastri, Madras, wrote three farces : the *Lilavilasa*[82], the *Chamunda*[83], and the *Nipunika*. In the first the father and mother want to give their daughter to two different kinds of boys, a young Pandit and a drunken profligate; the girl's brother wants her to marry a classmate of his; the last happens to save the girl from some thieves and the muddle is thus easily solved in favour of the last marrying the girl. In *Chamunda* the author takes up a similar significant social material of the times: the initial opposition of orthodoxy in villages to modern developments vanishing on the parties becoming beneficiaries from the modern amenities; a young widow who becomes a London-returned doctor, faces an antagonistic village devising a plot to humiliate her when suddenly her medical help to the wife of one of the detractors and her public spirit and sacrifice convert her revilers. Y. Mahalinga Sastri has two Prahasanas, one *Kaundinya Prahasana*[84] worked on the popular tale of a miser being outwitted by a fellow who makes a regular business of eating at another's house, and another *Sringara Naradiya*[85], worked on the motif of sex-transformation using a puranic milieu. *Pallisala Prahasana* (*MSCMM*. March-June 1942) uses the punning resources of Sanskrit and features a bold mother who tackles directly a school teacher who beat her son. A lady's overfondness for gold ornaments and the sorry end of this over-reaching desire form the theme of *Kanchanamala* by Surendramohana (*Manj*. Feb. 1955). Jiva Nyayatirtha writes a rather diffuse piece under the heading of farce in his *Purusharamaniya* (Calcutta 1948), but he makes it

[81]Published serially in the *SSPP*.
[82]Palghat 1935
[83]Madras
[84]Printed Madras 1930
[85]Printed 1956. Cf. *Stri-narada* in prose in the *AV*. 1944, by P. S. Dakshinamurti.

up in his *Kshuta-Kshema* (*Manj.* Nov. 1955) in which a niggard who had amassed black-market money succeeds in the other world too, and pressing Chitragupta himself in his service, outwits the God of Death, Yama, and obtains a fresh lease of life; in another two-act piece of his, which also he calls a farce, the *Chanda-tandava* (Calcutta), Sri Jiva portrays Stalin, Hitler, Mussolini and other forces of irreligion and conflict, and their failure (?) to enter India of religion and spirituality. S. S. Khot's *Malabhavishayam* (on the quack-astrologer) and *Lalavaidyam* (on the quack-doctor) have been received very well in Nagpur where they have been played; two other farces or social satires of Sri Khot are: *Dhruvavatara* and *Ha Hanta Sarade.*

In a very well written piece called *Alabdha-karmiyam* (Unemployment) published in the *Sri Chitra*[86], K. R. Nair of Alwaye presents the plight of the poor unemployed Sanskrit scholar who makes up his mind to enlist for war-service when suddenly a fifteen-rupee teacher's post comes to him from the famished Principal of a neglected Sanskrit College; the characters represent allegorically Sanskrit language and literature, the Poet (*Kavi*) the chief character, Imagination (*Bhavana*) his anxious wife, *Gairvani* (Sanskrit language, the mother), and the children of the house restricted through birth control necessitated by poverty, to two, viz. the Poem (the Son) and Taste (the Daughter). Vatukanatha Sarma exposes in his *Pandityatandavita* (*Vallari* 1953 ff) the vanity and fuss that Pandits of different sects and schools make. Madhusudana Kavyatirtha had published a similar satire on Pandits, the *Panditacharita Prahasana* in the *Vidyodaya.* The *Prataparudriyavidambana*, one of the unpublished works of the present writer, is a parody, weaving a comic plot in four acts out of the *reductio ad absurdum* of the hyperboles which vitiate latter-day Sanskrit poetry. The *Vimkuti* is another unpublished farce by the writer which has however a complete philosophical allegory behind it. The old form of the *Bhana* (monologue) is used by Y. Mahalinga Sastri to narrate the well-known fable of the monkey and the drum (the *Markata-mardalika*, *Manj.* Sep.-Nov. 1951). That even the traditional type of *Bhana*, the erotic monologue, could be made interesting now by the introduction of the contemporary social milieu,

[86]Published by the Maharaja's Sanskrit College, Trivandrum 1942, 1943.

the new fashions of the ladies, their clubs, their new dress, the new games of cards and tennis, the cinema, etc. is demonstrated in the *Sringarasekhara-bhana*[87] of Sundaresa Sarma.

Short one-act plays and episodes presented in dramatic form have recently been composed for being broadcast on the All-India Radio; the present writer has in this category the musical *Rasalila*[88] based on the *Bhagavata* and the *Kamasuddhi*[89], an interpretation of the message of the *Kumarasambhava* of Kalidasa; he has also presented on the AIR in drama-form episodes connected with three women *litterateurs* in the history of Sanskrit literature, *Vijjika*, *Vikatanitamba* and *Avantisundari*[90].

Translations and Adaptations from Regional Languages

As indicated in the introductory account, Sanskrit had always kept an intimate relation with the popular tongues and the literatures in them. In the modern period, the critical and historical study of Indian literature has induced many a Sanskritist to render into the Sanskrit medium some of the best examples from his own regional literatures. These renderings are from ancient as well as modern productions in these languages. Reference has already been made to modern novels and stories translated into Sanskrit from the languages and now we shall notice renderings from them of longer and shorter poems and other literary pieces. Some of the oldest works to be thus translated today into Sanskrit are from Tamil literature. Following in the footsteps of the famous Srivaishnava philosopher Vedanta Desika, some modern South Indian Sanskritists have translated the Vaishnavite canonical hymns of the Alwars; Medepalli Venkataramanacharya of Andhra (the *Girvanasathagopasahasra*), T. Narasimha Iyenger alias Kalki of Mysore (*Sahasragatharatnavali*[91]) and P. B. Annangarachariar of Kanchi[92] have rendered portions or whole of this hymnal collection. The celebrated Tirukkural has been translated by two writers, Appa Vajapeyin whose Sanskrit version is called *Suniti Kusumamala*[93]

[87]Kumbhakonam 1938
[88]*AV*. and also separately, 1945
[89]*AV*. and also separately, 1946
[90]*Prekshanakatrayi* Madras 1956
[91]Bangalore 1930
[92]Conjeevaram 1947, 1951, 1953, 1954
[93]Kumbhakonam 1927

and is accompanied by the author's Sanskrit gloss and a more recent and better version in compact Anushtubhs, entitled *Suktiratnakara*, by Sankara Subrahmanya Sastri which appeared serially in the *Sah.* (XIII ff.). In the same journal appeared also appreciations of the Tamil Ramayana of Kamban (XV) and an account of the Tamil Saint Pattinattar (XIII). S. Nilakantha Sastri of the Sanskrit College, Trivandrum, has rendered the Tamil *Kamba Ramayana* into Sanskrit verse and published parts of this version under the title *Sri Ramacharitam.* Subrahmanya Sastri of Kadayakkudi translated the Tamil didactic classic Naladiyar in his *Chatushpadi.* C. Narayanan Nair of Nemmara (Kerala State) has done the Tamil epic Silappadikaram into a Sanskrit Kavya of six cantos entitled *Kannaki-Kovalam*[94].

The stories in the *Kathasataka*[95] of S. Venkatarama Sastri are drawn from vernacular originals. Sesha Suri presented four hundred proverbs in Sanskrit (*MSCMM.* 1949) most of which are from Tamilnad and other parts of South India. Short accounts in verse and prose of famous Tamil literary figures have also appeared, e.g. K. S. Nagarajan of Bangalore has written on Andal, the Vaishnavite lady mystic (*AV.* 1947). Y. Mahalinga Sastri's *Dravidarya-subhashita-saptati* represents select renderings from the precious verses of the wise lady of Tamil, Avvai, (Tiruvalangadu 1952). Tamil folk-songs and tunes of well-known devotional songs have been imitated in Sanskrit by gifted composers and poets in South India : the boat-songs, the swing-song, Tiruppuhazh, Kummi, Kolattam, etc. Many of these are orally preserved, and also in manuscript. In one of the published works of Subrahmanya Sastri of Kadayakkudi many of these folk-tunes of Tamilnad are utilised by the poet. S. T. G. Varadachariar of Narasimha Sanskrit College, Chittugudur, has put into Sanskrit famous Sataka-poems in Telugu—the *Vemanasataka*, the *Sumatisataka*, the *Dasarathisataka*, the *Krishnasataka*, the *Bhaskarasataka* and the *Kalahastisvarasataka*.[96] Dr. G. V. Sitapati has rendered stray Telugu verses, some of the Telugu *Padas* of Kshetrajna which are used for Abhinaya in Bharata Natya, and also one of the poems in Telugu, *Purnamma* of Gurazada Appa Rao. Y. Mallikarjuna Rao of the Andhra

[94] Salem 1955
[95] Mysore 1898
[96] Chittugudur and Madras 1954, 1955 and 1956

Women's Sanskrit College, Rajahmundry, has brought out a Sanskrit prose version of the Telugu romance *Kalapurnodaya*. K. Yajnanarayana Dikshita has offered the first instalment of his rendering of the *Manucharitra* of Allasani Peddanna.

In Malayalam, the three distinguished modern poets of Kerala, Ulloor Paramesvara Aiyer, Vallathol Narayana Menon and Kumaran Asan have been translated by E. V. Raman Nambootiri[97] and N. Gopala Pillai.[98] Among other Sanskrit renderings from Malayalam may be mentioned the play *Chandrika* (Harippad 1955), the poems *Kesaviyam* and *Nalini*. In Maharashtra, M. R. Telang, the late versatile scholar whose writings are all buried in manuscript, published a translation of a short poem of Jnanesvara (*SR*. May 1947). Sakharam Sastri Bhagavat of Satara and M. P. Oka of Poona have rendered the *Jnanesvari* into Sanskrit. Pt. Oka's work was continued by Justice A. V. Khasnis. D. T. Sakurikar's *Girvanakekavali* (Bhor 1946) is a Sanskrit version of Moropant's *Kekavali*. N. C. Kelkar's well-known Marathi novel *Balidana* has been rendered into Sanskrit by Latkar Sastri (Kolhapur 1940). Bengali Sanskritists have done consistent work in this line like their South Indian brethren. The Bengali epic *Meghanadavadha* has appeared in Sanskrit (*SSPP*. 1933-34 ff., Nityagopala Vidyavinoda). Bhaskaranandasvamin has done into Sanskrit Chaitanya's life, the *Chaitanyacharitarmrita-samskrita-anuvadah* (*SSPP*. 1954, Part I separately issued, 1956-7). Translations from Bankim Chandra and Saratchandra have already been mentioned. Many poems, as also some of the shorter prose writings of Tagore, have been translated by Phatikalal Das : *Urvasi*, *Sparsamani*, *Abhisarika*, *Asaradanam*, *Nishphala Upaharah*, *Rashtram nah pratibudhyatam*, *Mastakavikrayah*, *Tuccha Kshatih*, *Svarna-mrigah*, all in the *Manj*. (1954, 1955) ; and *Pratinidhi* (*SSPP*. Oct. 1955) and *Pujarthini* by Dhirendranath (*SSPP*. Oct. 54). S. Parthasarathi's Sanskrit version of Tagore's '*Kacha-Devayani*' was enacted at the Madras Sanskrit College in 1924-25. The most sustained effort to bring Hindi poetry into Sanskrit has been put forth by Mathuranatha Sastri of Jaipur who has in his *Jayapuravaibhava*,[99] *Sahitya*-

[97] *Mahakavi Kritayah*, Trivandrum 1945 ; *Keralabhashavivartah*, Trivandrum 1948

[98] *Sitavicharalahari*, Trivandrum 1942

[99] Jaipur 1947

vaibhava[100] and *Gitivithi*[101] used a large number of metres and song-forms from Vrajbhasha, Hindi and Urdu with the express aim of acquainting the Sanskrit Pandit with the beauties of the regional poetry ; he has also translated into Sanskrit the *Satsai* of Biharidas. Jagadrama Sastri of Hoshiarpur has introduced popular Hindi tunes of today in his *Sangita Ramayana*. The Sanskrit periodical *Suryodaya* gives Sanskrit versions of note-worthy Hindi articles. Vipulananda has translated a prayer-song of Tulasidas (*AV*. 1950) and K. Tiruvenkatacharya of Mysore has in manuscript a Sanskrit version of Tulasidas's *Ramacharitamanasa*. The *Samskritam* (3. 4. 1956) has an article on the Bombay Gujarati mystic poetess Nirmala *alias* Syama and a translation of *Nisa* by Rahula Sankrityayana presenting Indo-European primitive life on the northern banks of the Volga, in 6000 B. C. (*Samskritam*, December 1957).

Renderings from other languages and literatures have also contributed to the enrichment of modern Sanskrit. Reference has already been made to translations from English poetry. It is but natural that the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam has repeatedly tempted Sanskritists also: Haricharana who translated *Kapala Kundala* and Adibhatla Narayanadas of Vijayanagaram were among the first to translate it; the next was Giridhar Sarma (*Amara-sukti-sudhakara*[102]); Prof. M. R Rajagopala Iyenger[103] was the third, the fourth was P. V. Krishnan Nair whose version is entitled *Madirotsava*[104] and the latest is the *Bhavacashaka* of Sadasiv Dange (Bombay 1956). Translations from Middle-East literature include stories like *Alibaba and the Forty Thieves*[105] by G. K. Modak and *Alladin and the Wonderful Lamp* (*Sah.* IV) and two versions of the *Gulistan*, the *Prasuna-vatika* by Ramaswami in the *SSPP*. (1923-24) and the *Pushpodyana* in two parts issued in book-form by R. V. Gokhale.[106] *Avesta* which is so close to Rigvedic Sanskrit has also been taken up, not by pure Sanskritists but by Parsis; the old renderings have been published in the series called *Collected Sanskrit Writings of the*

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[100] Jaipur 1930
[101] Bombay
[102] Jhalrapatan 1929
[103] Madras 1940
[104] Trichur 1945
[105] Longmans 1934
[106] Belgaum 1935

Parsis and among modern Parsi writers, the linguist Dr. I. J. S. Taraporewala has given a few samples of Avestan hymns in Sanskrit versions in the pages of the *Manj.*, and the well-known Gujarati poet, A. F. Khabardar, has given Sanskrit versions for a good number of hymns in his *New Light on the Gathas of Holy Zarathushtra* (Bombay 1951). From the more closely related Pali literature of Buddhism, Mm. Vidhusekhara Bhattacharya has rendered the *Milindapanha* (*SSPP*. Dec. 1936 ff.) ; the *Manj.* has been carrying serial renderings from the *Dhammapada* (Sep. 1952 ff.). Sanskrit versions of old Christian hymns and Greek proverbs with Sanskrit parallels and versions have also been given by R. Antoine S. J. and K. C. Chatterjee (*Manj.* 1951 and 1953). Some translations from Japanese literature also seem to have been published in the *Mitragoshthi*.

Sanskrit writers turned also to their brethren who had taken to English as the medium for expressing their literary gifts. *Aho Baliyasta Bhavitavyatayah* by P. Sankarasubrahmanya Sastri is an interesting philosophical story rendered into Sanskrit from B. R. Rajam Iyer's *Rambles in the Vedanta* (*Sah.* XII). V. V. Srinivasa Iyengar, one of the founders of the amateur stage in Madras, wrote a number of delightful playlets in English and one of these appeared in Sanskrit garb under the title *Damu Kutumbaka* in *UP*. (Vol. IV). The poem *Umadarsa* of C. Venkataramayya (Bangalore 1937) is a rendering of an English poem "Uma's Mirror" by K. A. Krishnaswami Iyer. One of the minor works of the well-known Indo-Anglican writer, K. S. Venkataramani, "A Day with Sambu"—a didactic piece for the young—was done into Sanskrit by Y. Mahalinga Sastri in his *Sambhucharyopadesa*.[107] Of the poetic productions of Sri Aurobindo, a few have been presented in Sanskrit under the title *Kavitanjali* (Madras 1946) by T. V. Kapali Sastri.

The National Movement

The new movement was really a re-awakening and a fresh search of the spirit of India. With modern education and the cultivation of the critical spirit and the study of Indian history in a more intensive manner, a fresh realisation of the value of

[107]Madras 1931

the Indian heritage came. The Sanskritist particularly turned to the glory that was ancient India with a fervour which urged his to a fresh effort for a renaissance. The higher spiritual values of Indian culture and the material nature of modern civilization, the growth of new fashions and foibles, the slavish aping of the West, all these produced a reversion and led to a reassertion of the Indian spirit. Soon there was the birth of nationalism and the freedom movement, and a galaxy of outstanding leaders of public movement appeared whose patriotism, sacrifice, eloquence and campaigns stirred the intelligentsia and the masses alike. The Sanskritists were also affected by the political activities and the Sanskrit writings of this age bear also the impress of this new spirit. In fact, the literature which is animated with this new spirit is the most striking part of contemporary Sanskrit.

In this class there are first the poems in which the sighing or dreaming author dwells upon the greatness of Bharat, the fall that came and his vision of a coming reconstruction. *Tad atitam eva* (It is all gone) is a lament on the bygone glories of India, by Annadacharana Tarkachudamani (*SC.* Vol. V). In the *Bharatimanoratha*[108], M. K. Tatacharya, P. W. D., Madras, falls into reverie on the beach, and calls up visions of the high culture of the country and its decadence in modern times. S. T. G. Varadachariar's *Sushuptivritta*[109] is a dream in three cantos, drawing first the dark picture as contrasted with the past glory and then presenting the figure of the Mahatma appearing on the horizon to relieve the gloom. In twenty-five Mandakranta verses breathing ardent love of the country, M. V. Subrahmanya Iyer (*SSPP.* 1925-26) bemoans in his *Bharata-vadhu-vishada* the decay of the fine traditions of India. The *Bharata-bhagya-viparyaya*[110] of K. S. Krishnamurti Sastri is a very elaborate poem on this theme. The *Bharati Gita* (*Sah.* I) represents some excellent Arya verses on Bharata Mata. There are indeed very few issues of any Sanskrit journal which do not have some poem on Bharata Mata. T. V. Kapali Sastri, in his *Bharati-stava*,[111] sees the very image of the Supreme Mother Goddess in Bharata Mata. In three cantos, the *Bharati Gita* of the lady Lakshmi

[108]Published at the time of the First World War
[109]Chittugudur and Madras 1937
[110]Serially published in the *MV.*
[111]Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry 1949

Ammal describes the glory of India, the fall and the call to her sons to work for her all-round revival. The *Saradaprasada*[112] of Mocherla Ramakrishna presents the discomfiture of one who traduces Indian culture. Mm. Damodara Sastri of Puri has composed a poem on the greatness of India, called *Bharata-gaurava.*

Impress of Modern Events

Next comes the literature relating to the leaders of the national movement. All the journals, from the *Samskrita Chandrika* onwards, carried poems and accounts relating to the lives and achievements of the leaders. In Vol. V of the *SC.* there is a poem in 37 verses on Tilak's incarceration. In the *Sah.* appeared a prose account of Gokhale, an elegy on his death (IX, X) and an article on Sarojini Naidu. The recent Lokamanya Tilak Celebrations prompted the writing of four Sanskrit biographies on the scholar-patriot by M. S. Aney, K. W. Chitale, Vasudeva Sastri Bagewadikar and the Editor of the *Madhuravani*, Pandarinathacharya Galagali. Sri Nagarajan of Bangalore has a series of biographies on the patriots, the *Bharatiyadesabhaktacharitam*[113] which includes Tilak, Andrews, Vivekananda,[114] Radhakrishnan and others. Pt. Bhiksha Ram of Kurukshetra has written prose biographies of Malavya, Rajendra Prasad, Patel and Nehru. The distinguished educationist Asutosh Mookerji is the subject of the *Asutosh Avadana* by Kalipada published in the journal *Samskrita-padya-vani.* The Andhra Editor, patriot and patron Nagesvara Rao Pantulu is the subject of a short biographical work, *Jivita Caritra* (Madras 1938), by V. Suryanarayana Sastri. Lakshminarayana Shanbhogue's *Rashtrasabhapatigaurava*[115] describes all the Congress Presidents, has a special poem on Subhas Bose, and commemorates the 1935 Jubilee Session of the Congress. There is a poem on Nehru in the *SR.* (Nov. 1948); quite recently S. B. Warnekar of Nagpur has published a century of verses on Nehru (*the Jawahara-tarangini*).

It is, however, the personality of Mahatma Gandhi, which combined with political work some of the most ancient

[112]Nellore 1949
[113]Bangalore 1952
[114]Separately issued, Bangalore 1947
[115]Bombay 1938

ideals and techniques of the Mahatmas of India, that proved the greatest attraction to Sanskrit writers and provided them with a hero worthy of new Gitas and Mahakavyas, verily like a new Rama or a modern Buddha. The story of his Satyagraha which reads like a romance in the history of modern India was made the subject of different poems, Kshama Rao's *Satyagraha Gita*[116] and *Uttara-satyagraha Gita*[117] in the gracefully flowing epic measure, the *Satyagraha Katha* of C. Panduranga Sastri (the *MV.*), the *Satyagrahanitikavya* of Satyadev Vasishth of Jajjhar (Rohtak), and the summary of Gandhian thought by Mr. Tadpatrikar of Poona, echoing profusely the Bhagavad Gita which was also the Mahatma's favourite book. In the classical Mahakavya form, Swami Bhagavad Acharya wrote the three parts of his epic on this "Celestial Tree of Bharat", the *Bharataparijata*, the *Parijatapahara* and the *Parijatasaurabha*.[118] In twenty cantos, Sadhu Saran Misra of Darbhanga has produced his Kavya on the Mahatma, *Srimad Gandhi-Charita* (MS.). Among expositions of Gandhian philosophy, D. S. Sarma's *Gandhi Sutras*[119] should be mentioned for the striking time-honoured form of Sutras employed by the author: the aphorisms here are glossed by citations in English of passages from Gandhiji's own writings and speeches. Shorter poems on Gandhiji and his teachings have appeared in a number of journals and collections of minor poems, e.g. the *Gandhisaptaha* by S. Krishnambhatta in the *AV.* (1945) and the one in Dr. Chhabra's *Suvarnabindu* which with its Vedic metre suggests that the Mahatma belongs to the succession of India's Rishis. The latest presentation of the thoughts of Gandhiji is the *Gandhi-sukti-muktavali* by C. D. Deshmukh which renders into Sanskrit in diverse metres a hundred select sayings of Gandhiji.

Reference was already made to short stories having for their theme episodes of the freedom struggle. The present writer's *Gopa Hampanna*[120] commemorates in a story-poem the heroic death of a Railway pointsman who saved the honour of a poor Hindu lady from the evil attention of some drunken British

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[116] Paris 1932

[117] Bombay 1949

[118] Second complete edition, Ahmedabad 1951. See also Dwijendranath Sastri's *Svarajyavijaya*.

[119] Madras 1938, 1946

[120] *AV.* 1947; also issued separately

soldiers. For a regular drama on this struggle, we may see the *Bharata Mangalam* (*SSPP*. 1951 ff.) in which the will or united force of the people, *Gana-sakti*, supported on either side by Mother Goddess Chandi and the Bhagavad Gita, is featured as a leading character and the release of the Motherland (Matri-mukti) is made the purpose. The recent centenary celebrations of the 1857 movement has led to some productions in Sanskrit on this first struggle for freedom; e. g. the *Kranti-yuddha* in prose by Vasudeva Sastri Bagevadikar, and the exploits of the heroes of this struggle—*Kranti-viranam Adbhutakathah* published in *MV*. (May 1957).

The journals have also many articles discussing the political situation and questions of national importance. The *SC*. combining the austere national habits and the question of *Svadesi*, wrote against western manufacturers, dumping on India soaps etc.—*Vaidesika-vanijyam Bharatadesiyaḥ Dharmas ca*. The *Sri* (X.iii, iv) has a poem on *Khadi*. The *SR*. appeals to the Princes to ameliorate the conditions of the masses and the Kisans (1939) and hand over power to people (Oct. 1947). The *Desa-dasa*, a poem in the *SR*. (1942) outlines what should be done for the country's all-round progress. The latest Bhoodan movement of Vinoba Bhave is the subject of a poem in the *Bharati* (1953), the *Bhudana-Chatussloki-gita*.

Like the *Gandhi Sutras*, the *Rashtrasmriti*[121] of Ram Rai, author of Gramism, adopts a striking medium, brief sententious prose in the form of a series of affirmations which every patriot should utter to himself.

The campaigns and meetings of the freedom movement needed the help of music and national song to sustain and enthuse the energies of the volunteers and the masses. To the crop of national songs that thus arose, Sanskrit also contributed its quota. The *Bharata Bhajana*[122] of a well-known South Indian music composer, Mayuram Visvanatha Sastri, adopts a popular form of Sanskrit, as also common Hindustani-cum-Carnatic tunes to enable the songs to be sung widely. Mathuranatha Sarma's *Sahityavaibhava* includes some national songs (*Desa-gitis*).

The attainment of Independence was hailed in Sanskrit poems: the *Svatantra Bharata* by Devakinandana Sarma in the

[121] Ahmedabad 1950
[122] Madras 1948

SR. (Aug. 1947), the *Svarajya Ketu* (the Light—Banner—of Freedom) of the present writer published in the *Hindu*, Madras, during the first Independence Day celebrations, the *Bharataprasasti* of Kunhan Raja (*Ad. Lib. Bull.* Feb. 1950) and the *Svatantrya-jyotis* of M. Ramakrishna Bhat of Bangalore may be mentioned. Pt. Prabhu Datta Sastri has poems on the National Flag and the *Charka*.

The tragic end of the Mahatma naturally evoked many elegies and longer poems: the *Mahatma*[123] of the present writer, *The Mahatma* by Amarachandra (*SSPP.* Feb. 1948), *Ha Visvavandya Gandhi* by Sudhakar (*SR.* Feb. 1948), the *Mahatmavijaya*[124] of K. L. V. Sastri, the *Sraddhanjali*[125] of G. C. Jhala, the *Mahatma-nirvana*[126] of V. Narayana Nair, the *Sokaslokasataka* of Badarinatha Jha[127] depict the gloom cast over the country and the loss sustained by the people by the passing away of the Father of the Nation; all of them set forth, briefly or at length, the ideals that Gandhiji has bequeathed to us.

The initiative to place the Constitution of Free India in Sanskrit was due to Dr. C. Kunhan Raja who prepared a draft translation of some sections in his *Bharata-rashtra-sanghatana*.[128] Another effort in this line, before the Government Committee took up the work, is that of a Bezwada lawyer, G. Krishnamurti, who did the sections passed by the Constituent Assembly up to 8-1-1949.

Among political events of the post-Independence period, the dramatic developments in Kashmir ending with the imprisonment of Shaikh Abdulla is dramatised by N. Bhima Bhat in his *Kashmira-sandhana-samudyama*.[129]

Several of the problems of Free India are discussed in the pages of the Sanskrit journals. The shortcomings of the Congress regime, corruption, black-market and other evils, lack of encouragement of indigenous learning and culture—all this is lamented in a poem called *Svatantrya-abhasa* (the Semblance of Freedom) published by P. Karmalkar Sastri in the *Samskrita Bhavitavya*

[123]The Vedanta Kesari, Madras 1948; also separately.
[124]Palghat 1949
[125]In *Vande Mataram* and his collection *Sushama*, 1955
[126]Trichur 1954, with author's gloss
[127]Darbhanga 1953
[128]Adyar Library, 1948
[129]*AV.*, Bangalore XI-XII, 1952-53

(21-8-54). A recurring theme is of course Sanskrit and its present condition. Many poems on Sanskrit have appeared and continue to appear. Attention was drawn to a play published in the *Vijnana Chintamani* on the fate of Sanskrit with English on one side and the local languages on the other ; similar compositions continue to be written, e. g. the *Samskrita-vag-vijaya*, a five-act play in Sanskrit-cum-Hindi by Prabhu Datta Sastri (Delhi 1942). The *Bharati-saptaka-traya* by Kasi Krishnamacharya, and the older *Vani-vilapa* by R. V. Krishnamachariar (Kumbhakonam 1926) are poems on the lamentable condition of the Sanskrit muse. The journals carry numerous poems of this class.

The eyes of the Sanskrit world are turned now in one anxious concentrated gaze on the Sahitya Akademi and the Sanskrit Commission[130] sponsored by its Sanskrit Board.

This survey would clearly show that Sanskrit is neither slumbering nor merely reproducing some classical patterns; in a world of change, the Sanskritists are also taking their part and trying to bring to bear on affairs their reactions, criticisms and aspirations.

Future of Sanskrit

The Sanskritists are putting forth a heroic effort to keep their language alive, and not merely to preserve it as the classical repository of hoary wisdom and antique artistic productions. The realisation has come upon them that mere archaeological researches, the quoting of the observations of Sir William Jones or Max Muller or the singing of the praises of the past cannot serve to give that language a living status. Contemporary use and original activity in it can alone secure for it this dignity. Along with the Pandit, the English-educated Sanskritist is also now freely writing and talking in Sanskrit. Even at University level, Sanskrit is used for answering examinations and writing theses for post-graduate degrees. Sanskrit conferences have come to stay. Efforts at simplifying Sanskrit and reforming methods of its teaching, with a view to counter the plea that it is a difficult language, are being undertaken ; several Sanskrit books and pamphlets have appeared on this subject of Sanskrit teaching. Considerable numbers of the people have returned Sanskrit as

[130]The Report of this Commission is now published and the Government are considering the recommendations.

their mother-tongue in the last census. In the midst of their pre-occupations, busy public figures like the former Union Finance Minister continue to cherish their gift for original composition in Sanskrit.

The chief characteristic of this new spirit in Sanskrit is the impact of the Western ideas and forms of literature, the renewal of intimate relation with the regional literatures, its reflection of contemporary India and the infusing into it of the ideals and aspirations that animate the nation today. In this expansion, there have appeared certain features which require underlining. Sanskrit should, like other Indian languages, absorb a certain amount of English and foreign vocabulary but with a language having a heritage of a technical literature and incomparably fecund word-forming resources, the new writers in Sanskrit may exert themselves in evolving a more even, elegant and harmonious vocabulary and style. Barbarisms such as are committed by some North Indian Sanskrit journals, e. g. *Sarkarasya* (of the Government), *Kardah* (card) and *Bilam* (Bill), should be eschewed. Sanskrit could also evolve better equivalents than expressions like the following common in Sanskrit journals and essays: *Krishna-apana* for black-market, *Uccha-sikshana* for higher education, *Anavritapatra* for open letter, *Vilini-karana* for merger. There are Sanskrit *Tadbhava* and *Tatsama* words in the local languages which are semantically specialised differently in different parts of the country; their usage has to be considered and standardized. Particularly names of places in India and the name India itself need not be used and transcribed in Sanskrit writings in the wrong and mutilated form in which the Britisher has popularised them; in Europe, the Continent does not pronounce or write a single place-name in the way the English do ; to use broken English forms, turn them into Sanskrit stems and then add Sanskrit terminations to them results in a lot of ugliness which could be eliminated.

Under the influence of their own mother-tongues, many a North Indian Sanskritist is unable to stick to the pure Anushtubh cadence without lapsing into that of the Pramanika, to note a conjunct consonant intruding and breaking the metrical quantity and to observe the rule that only at the end of the even feet a short syllable could pass for a long one or could be left without Sandhi with the next following word. More intense

cultivation of Sanskrit activity alone can bring back the correct ear for these. The expansion of literary activity in the age when Sanskrit education is not widespread or intense has also produced the defect of grammatical lapses; but the wonder is that most of the authors write correctly. The development of an easy direct prose style is a distinct gain but the idiom, diction and construction should smell less of English and be more in conformity with the genius of the language ; in the pre-Bana age, in early Bhashyas, in early drama and in fable literature, there is pregnant vocabulary and an uninvolved style which we could bring back into vogue now. In literary forms, the minor poem, the short and long story and the short and long play, the essay and the thesis have all representatives in the classical productions with which they could easily fall in line.

In drama, the introduction of scene-divisions within an Act, on the model of the western plays, is itself not an innovation of major importance ; all such features could be adopted as fit in well with the general plan of the Sanskrit drama. While it is necessary to renovate Sanskrit drama by pruning it of its verbiage and giving its characters more flesh and bone, and its plot more action, it should be borne in mind that Sanskrit drama at its best has its own unique technique and ideology and when in the West itself the old conception of tragedy has changed and critics like Eliot define the purpose of a drama in terms identical with what Bharata and Anandavardhana enunciated, Sanskrit writers today may well pause before they start imitating models out-moded even in the West. Elements of artistic value should be assimilated and made into an organic integration, and following the lead given by Kalidasa that nothing is valued as old or new but only as being inherently good, and that given by Saktibhadra that merit matters and not the place from which a thing comes, Sanskrit should re-emerge into a creative language, adding to its long record fresh achievements.

SINDHI LITERATURE

By

L. H. AJWANI

THE LANGUAGE

The Sindhi Language, as Dr Trumpp observed in his *Grammar* (1872) 'is a pure Sanskritical language, more free from foreign elements than any other of the North Indian vernaculars. The old Prakrit grammarians may have had their good reason to designate the Apabhramsha dialect, from which the modern Sindhi is immediately derived, as the lowest of all the Prakrit dialects; but if we compare now the Sindhi with its sister-tongues, we must assign it, in a grammatical point of view, the first place among them.'[1] Writing earlier than the learned Doctor, Captain George Stack, author of *Sindhi Grammar*, deprecated the tendency to regard the Sindhi Language as 'only fit for clowns' and urged that 'the Sindhi will to the philologist prove a more interesting study than that of many of the other Indian dialects. The habit of affixing signs to words in lieu of the Pronouns and the Prepositions governing them, the regular form of the Passive Voice, the use of the Impersonals, the reduplicated Causal Verbs, and other points which the learner will mark as he proceeds, give to it beauties distinct from most Indian tongues.'[2] The Sindhi script, now in use, was devised by British administrators one hundred years ago, and as this script is Arabic in its characters it disguises the fact that Sindhi is derived from Sanskrit, and that it is the eldest among all the Prakrit dialects which have emerged as independent Indian Languages. A Muslim Professor, Abdul Karim Sandelo, in his recently published work on the derivations of Sindhi words bears testimony[3] to the fact that most of the Sindhi words are derived from Sanskrit. At the same time it must be recognized that the vocabulary of the Sindhi language is quite a mixed one containing thousands of words that are of Persian-Arabic origin and not a few that are Dravidian

[1]Introduction, p. 1.
[2]Bherumal Mihirchand : *Sindhi Treatise on the Sindhi Language* (1956), p, 77.
[3]*Tahqiq Lughat Sindhi* (1955)

and even pre-Aryan. Sind was the first Indian province to be overrun by the Muslim invaders (A. D. 712) and even before this invasion it had borne the brunt of hordes from Greece and Iran, Scythia and Afghanistan. The Sindhis have in their veins the blood of many races and nationalities and have never known such taboos as untouchability or restrictions on foreign travel. The Sindhi traders have for centuries scoured deserts and seas and planted themselves in lonely outposts where scarcely any other Indian will be found. Naturally, their language has been enriched by accretions from many foreign sources.

It is well known that the Sindhis were a civilized race as far back as history can reach, and one might expect that there would be some records of that civilization in the Sindhi language and literature. A characteristic feature, however, of the history of Sind has been a repetition of Mohen-jo-Daro or Mounds of the Dead burying under their successive layers one civilization after another, leaving not a trace in stone or marble, painting or poetry, of the glories of these civilizations—until, perchance, a Rakhal Das Bannerji appears centuries later to dig beneath the surface and discover some signs of a vanished past. The river Sindhu, with its ever-shifting banks and beds, is responsible for what may be called the March of the Desert.

Poetry : Shah and his Successors

It is therefore not a strange thing that the first authentic name in Sindhi literature is to be found so late as the end of the fifteenth century. Stray verses are attributed to the days of the rule of the Arabs, and tales like those of *Dodo Chanesar* and riddles in verse such as the Mamui Prophecies were current in the countryside at an earlier period, but the first recorded Sindhi poetry is the verses of Qazi Qazan (end of fifteenth century) cast in *doha* form and uttering the note that is a constant feature in Sindhi poetry, namely that without a sight of the Beloved (or realization of the Infinite) external accomplishments such as scholarship and piety are so many monsters of the deep to drag one down to perdition. Qazi Qazan makes a grateful mention of the Jogi or yogi who awoke him from mental torpor, and thus bears witness to the most remarkable characteristic of Sindhi poetry—the mingling of the twin streams of Hindu philosophy and Muslim faith to form the swelling waters of what is popularly known as Sufistic Poetry.

The impulse manifested first in Qazi Qazan's verses eame to Sind from the great spiritual awakening or movement in India that cast forth such God-intoxicated souls as Kabir and Chaitanya, Nanak and Tukaram. In Sind this movement came to a head in the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit (1689-1752) whose *Risalo* or Poetical Works is one the world's masterpieces and the most precious literary heritage of the Siddhi people. Shah Abdul Latif and many forerunners, chief among them his own great-great-grandfather Shah Abdul Karim of Bulri (1538-1623), some of whose philosophical verses were incorporated in the *Risalo* by his illustrious descendant.

Shah Abdul Latif, called simply Shah or 'King', was a nature-poet, a story-teller and a mystic rolled into one. His various *Surs* or musical chapters bring before the reader the land of Sind and its people—the great river and the fisher-folk, the not-so-far-away desert and the camel-driver, the turrets of the Ruler's palace and the well where village maidens go, the princess in her garden and the pearl-merchant repairing to the (Persian) Gulf, the weaver at his shuttle and the potter at his wheel, the peasant rejoicing in the rain and the warrior springing to arms. Around these scenes he weaves tales of Sindhi heroines which are sublime and pathetic and establishes a kinship through his Sasuis and Maruis, Suhnis and Nuris, Leilas and Moomals, with that other king of poetry of whom it has been said that he has heroines but no heroes. Every one of Shah's Tales has a deep spiritual significance. The desert melodies of Shah conjure up a certain beatific vision wherein all grossness is dissolved and only the Trinity of the Lover, the Beloved and Love appears, finally to be resolved into the One who remains while many change and pass. The simple words of Shah have deluded some foreigners into thinking that he is a humble poet; the Sindhis know better and they place him in the ranks of master-singers and mystics such as Tulsidas and Surdas, Rumi and Hafiz, and draw upon Shah as on an inexhaustible treasury for continuous inspiration and purest enjoyment.

With Shah go two other names of immortal Sindhi poets, the trio forming a constellation not surpassed in the firmament of Sindhi letters. Sachal, surnamed Sarmast or 'the Intoxicated One' (1739-1826), and Sami (1743-1850), so called after his preceptor (Swami), are two other poets with whom no other Sindhi

poets may be compared. Sachal's was a one-track mind and his gift was that of the lyrist; he had no tale to relate, no scene to conjure up. He was so thoroughly intoxicated with the presence of the Beloved that he could not think of anything mundane. Ritual and routine had no meaning for him; why need he pray or study who had a glimpse of the Lovely One at the window? The *Kafis* of Sachal have sweetness, vigour and an ecstatic fervour which place them in a class by themselves. They are sung even to this day by all classes of Sindhis. Sami's *slokas*, on the other hand, are characterized by restfulness and the Vedantic urge to cast out Avidya (Ignorance or Illusion) so as to find Illumination of the Spirit. The central point in Shah, Sachal and Sami is the same: quest of the Soul after the Oversoul, the journey of the ray back to the Sun, the bursting of the bubble and the oneness of the drop and the ocean.

The character of Sindhi poetry was fixed by the works of Shah, Sachal and Sami, and has not changed. Sindhi poetry is Sufistic, free from sectarianism and surcharged with the consciousness of the presence of One in the Many. There is no question of Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man with the Sindhi poets: their belief is that I, You and He are but one entity. If A hurts B, he is but hurting himself. Separateness of any kind is regarded as detracting from a man's spiritual progress. As Bedil (1814-1873), perhaps the most distinguished of the successors of Shah, Sachal and Sami, puts it: 'My (separate) name "Bedil" is so much make-believe or pretence,' and his only desire is union with the Beloved. He cares not for ritual or propriety; he has lost all feeling of shame. One of the results of the eclecticism and Sufistic tendencies of Sindhi poetry is freedom from bigotry, casteism and sectarianism: the Sufi is 'la Kufi' (without a dogma or creed). Rohal (d. 1782) and Dalpat (d. 1841), one Muslim, the other Hindu, have expressed this freedom from doctrine and dogma. Rohal rejects all creeds in favour of the one he calls 'Rah preen ji' (The Way of the Beloved) and blames both Hindus and Muslims for evolving what he terms the third 'Religion of Hate'. Dalpat naively asks: 'If Kaaba be the House of God, why discard the temple where Deities are lodged?' and laments that the people of the world should be divided into sects. In this mingling of faiths in Sind it sometimes so happens that the Muslim poet speaks as a Gopi to his Beloved Krishna. A

continuous stream of Sufi poets has satisfied the thirst of the Sindhis for peace and illumination of the Spirit. The most memorable of these poets, apart from the six mentioned above, have been: Hamal Laghari, Murad, Daryakhan, Bekas (son of Bedil) and Jiwatsingh. Many of them have written verses in the Siraiki dialect of the Sindhi language, giving to their poetry the artlessness and sweetness of the speech of the border-folk.

It must be conceded that the best Sufistic poetry in Sindhi is of pre-British days and bears kinship in content as well as in form (*doha* form) to the poetry in Hindi, Punjabi and other North Indian languages. This kinship was rudely disturbed when the British took over in 1843. As Persian ceased to be the court language, all the literati turned towards their own tongue for ordinary communication as well as elegant composition. And so dawned the era of Sindhi *Qasidas*, *Ghazals*, *Masnavis*, *Rubaiyats*, *Musadases*, *Mukhamases* and what not. Before the British conquest, a Sindhi poet here and there, such as Sabit Ali Shah (1740-1810), wrote elegies and eulogies in the Sindhi language on the pattern of the Persian poets, but it was not until Khalifa Gul Mahomed (1809-1856) brought out his *Diwan* or Volume of *ghazals* in Sindhi that Persian prosody almost superseded the old *doha* and stanzaic forms. Gul can scarcely be called a major poet but his example made Sindhi poets turn to Persian prosody and Persian imagery until at last the Sindhi poetry became interlarded with Persian idiom and allusions—the nightingale and the rose, the thorn and the rose, the moth and the candle, the ruby wine and the cup-bearer, waterfall and the scented garden, gazelle-eyes and cypress stature, and, of course, Yusuf and Zuleikha, Leila and Majnun, Shirin and Farhad, etc. It is doubtful whether the tuning or twisting and turning of the Sindhi speech into Persian prosodic forms brought any substantial gains to the Sindhi language and literature. The hundred years that have elapsed since Gul have not cast up a single poet whose *Ghazals*, *Rubaiyats*, *Qasidas* or *Musadases* can come upto the *Kafis* and *Beyts*, *Wais* and *Surs* of even nameless or little-known Sindhis like Moryo (1876) and Laloo (1890) who sing of Sasui Punhoo, Rai Dyach, Marui, Kamsen Kamrup, etc. It is noticeable that major Sindhi poets (e.g. Bedil) who also tried their hand at Persianized poetry in Sindhi are scarcely read for those passages; they are remembered for their Sindhi *Kafis* or pure lyrics. Sangi (1851-

1924), Khaki (Lilaramsingh), Mirza Kalich Beg (1853-1929), Hyderbux Jatoi ('Hari Haqdar' Leader), Shamsuddin Bulbul (whose first book of *ghazals* was published in 1891), and Lekhrai Aziz (mostly a derivative poet), are some of the names that will occur to the mind while reviewing the Sindhi poetry of the Persian pattern for the last hundred years, but none of these poets can claim to be a major poet or even a popular poet. The number of those who have brought out *Diwans* or collections of Sindhi *Ghazals*, *Qasidas*, etc. is legion, e. g. Kassim, Fazil, Wasif, Kazim, and so on, but their poems are more poetical exercises than anything else. Mirza Kalich Beg's translation of Omar Khayyam's *Quatrains* or *Rubaiyat*, Masrur's little masterpiece in *Musadas* form, Abojho's *Musadas* on the model of Urdu poet Hali and Jatoi's famous address or apostrophe to the river Sindhu, are almost the only poems on Persian models that will survive. Lately, in Pakistan as well as in India, there has been a swing-over in favour of light poetry written on the Persian model, Shaikh Ayyaz (author of *Bagi*) being the principal practitioner of this art in Pakistan, and Parsram Zia in India. But the way Lekhraj Aziz's recent publication *Abshar* (Waterfall) has fallen flat is a proof that the Sindhi mind will not react favourably to artificial and heavily-padded imitations of Persian poetry.

Contemporary Poetry

The most remarkable phase of Sindhi contemporary poetry took its rise about thirty years ago when the New Sind was born with the discovery of Mohen-jo-Daro and the building of the Sukkur Barrage, the founding of literary and cultural societies like Sindhi Sahit Society and Sindhi Muslim Adabi Society, and the introduction of Sindhi in the University syllabi. The honour of leading the Sindhi poetry from the wilderness of Persian imitations to homely speech and natural Sindhi idiom and imagery belongs to a humble school-master, Kishinchand Bewas (d. 1947) who sang the annals of the poor, described beauties of nature, and furnished simple songs and lyrics for the children, in his *Shirin Shair*, *Ganga Joon Lahroon* and other books and poems. Bewas may not have possessed technical excellence of a high order and he may have mixed up Sindhi traditional verse with Persian prosodic forms, but he is always himself, fresh, original and striking in expression. His great achievement was to found

a school of poets—Hari Dilgir (*Kod* or 'Sea-shells'), Hoondraj Dukhayal (*Sangeet Phool*, 'countryside melodies'), Ram Panjwani, Gobind Bhatia and others who have not only taken pains to issue their Master's poems in a handy form (to which publication the present author was privileged to furnish an Introduction) but have continued his liberal tradition.

A remarkable feature of contemporary Sindhi poetry is the part taken in the new movement by students, teachers and professors. N. V. Thadhani's masterly translation of the *Bhagvad Gita* (1923) in Sindhi verse written on Persian prosodic model but in language derived from the Sanskrit scriptures, and the memorable translations of the same scripture by Menghraj Kalwani, Mulchand Lala and Chainrai Bulchand, and last but not least, its translation in free verse by T. L. Vaswani, have given to Sindhi poetry treasures in verse. Hyderbux Jatoi's *Shikwah* ('Complaint to God') written on the model of Iqbal roused a storm at the hands of bigots, but his address to the river Sindhu (mentioned already) and *Azadi-i-Qoum* (Songs of Freedom, 1947) will continue to be read when much of *Ghazal* verse is forgotten. Jatoi began as a follower of the Gul and Sangi school and then became a revolutionary in politics as well as in literature, so that he takes the second place with Bewas in the history of New Sindhi poetry. Another poet of the new era worth mentioning is Dewandas Azad whose adaptation of Arnold's *Light of Asia* under the title *Poorab Sandesh* (1937) is a popular reading with all lovers of Sindhi verse.

The recent tendency in Sindhi poetry is not to follow strictly either the traditional verse of Shah, Sachal, or Sami and the Sufistic tradition, nor to cling helplessly or pedantically to the Persian prosody and imagery, but to carve out another path of free verse, mostly on the model of European literature. The writer who originated this movement was one whose namc is the greatest in the history of Sindhi culture. Dayaram Gidumal (1857-1927), savant and saint, published about thirty years ago massive volumes of philosophic verse—*Mana Ja Chahbook* (Whips of the Mind)—and the free form of these verses and their content have effected a revolution in the taste of the more thoughtful and aspiring of Sindhi youth. Another influence is in the way of popularizing free verse in Sindhi by a variety of writers in all kinds of verse, prose and prose-verse, notable among these trans-

lators being Mangharam Malkani, Lalchand Amardinomal, Arjan Israni and Hariram Mariwala (whose *Phala-choond* or translation of Tagore's *Fruit-gathering* appeared only last year). Translation of other Indian poets (e. g. Dayo Mansharamani's translation of Nazrul Islam) have also furthered the tendency to free verse movement—Narayan Shyam, part-author of *Maka -Ja-Phura* (Dewdrops) and writer of Sonnets in Sindhi, and Ayyaz, versatile man of letters and perhaps the most notable living Sindhi poet. Other names are those of Anchal and Rahi, Gordhan Mahbubani, Khialdas Fani, 'Gumnam' (Baldev Gajria), Moti Prakash and Arjan Shad in India, and Y. K. Shaikh, Bashir Moriani, Burdah Sindhi and Abdulkarim Gadai in Pakistan. The credit for writing the two most poignant pieces in contemporary Sindhi poetry goes to Ayyaz for his apostrophe to Shah which recalls Wordsworth's 'Milton ! thou shouldst be living at this hour' and to Khialdas Fani for his not-to-be-forgotten 'O my Land ! my land', giving expression to his feelings while forced to quit his native land in the upheaval of the partition of India. T. L. Vaswani's far-reaching sermons in free Sindhi verse have played a great part in freeing Sindhi mind from the slavish pedantry of Persian prosody and imagery. A writer of verse and prose who showed promise of brilliance and power (Tolaram Balani) was cut off by early death.

Drama

In other lands poetry and drama have often gone hand in hand. In Sind, while poetry has forged ahead, drama has lagged behind. Even the Sindhi folk-dances (*Bhagats*) have produced no plays. Only two Dramatic Clubs have so far functioned in Sind, one, the D. J. Sind College Amateur Dramatic Society which started at the end of the nineteenth century, and the other, the Rabindranath Literary and Dramatic Club, started in the twenties of this century. The first staged translations of Shakespeare's plays (of which Mirza Kalich Beg's *Shah Elia* or *King Lear* was the best) and some other select plays, of which Shewasing Ajwani's *Kanisht* (1902), an adaptation of Sheridan's *Pizarro* was the best. Some plays were taken from the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* (e.g. Lilaramsingh's *Draupadi, Ramayana,* and *Harishchanda*). The R.L.D.C.'s most successful production was *Umar Marui* of Lalchand Amardinomal, the theme and poetical

passages being taken from Shah. A real 'find' of the Club was K. S. Daryani, author of *Mulk-ja-Mudabar* (Ibsen's *Pillars of Society*) and *Bukh-jo-Shikar* (Victim of Starvation). Mangharam Malkani, author of social plays and originator of one-act plays (Five Little Plays), is the most considerable writer of plays now living. The Shikarpuri Dramatic Clubs gave to Sindhi the *Gamtoo* (Pretenders) series of plays by Jethanand Nagrani, but like Ursani's *Bad Nasib Thari* (Unfortunate Thari) these plays are little better than farces.

Of the plays that can be enjoyed in a quiet study the two best undoubtedly are *Khurshid* of Mirza Beg, a sparkling play with really fine songs, written so far back as 1870, and Lilaram Pherwani's *Hika Raat* (1936), a variation on a theme taken from *Sur Leila Chanesur* of Shah. Dayaram Gidumal's dialogue in *Sata Saheliyum*, and Kauramal Chandanmal's translation of *Ratnavali* (1888) are valuable only for curious readers. Ram Panjwani's *Mumal Rano* is a fine play in reading as well as on the stage, which cannot be said for Kalyan Advani's translation of *Shakuntala*.

PROSE

Sindhi prose has, however, made a considerable headway within the last hundred years. Beginning with tales of the countryside, like *Jam Bhambo Zemindar's Tale* (1853) by Ghulam Hussain, imitations of Saadi's *Gulistan* such as Kewalram Salamatrai's *Sookhri* and *Gul* series, and caricatures of *Arabian Nights* like Akhund Lutfallah's *Gul Qand* (1882), the Sindhi prose came into its own chiefly with translations. The first half-century 1857-1907, era of translations, was ushered in by grammarians and lexicographers like Trumpp, Shirt, Stack and Grierson in English, and Udharam Thanwerdas (Grammar) and Jhamatmal Narumal (*Vaitpati Kosh*) in Sindhi. The two great names in the translations of the period are those of Mirza Kalich Beg who began his voluminous and encyclopaedic labours with his translation of Bacon's *Essays* (*Maqalat al Hikmat*) in 1877 and followed it up with the English translation of *Chachnama* and Sindhi translations of classics like Ghazzali's *Kimayi-i-Saadat*; and Kauromal Chandanmal (1844-1916) who, beginning with a tract in favour of women's education, *Pako Paha* (1872) translated mostly for children books like *History of Columbus*, *Arya Nari Charitar*, and

Radharani (of Bankim). The one translation that was the most popular was that of Johnson's *Rasselas* by Nawalrai and Udharam (1870); it led the way to such translations as that of Scott's *Talisman* by Navalrai's brother, Hiranand. A translator who was more an original writer than a translator, was Dayaram Gidumal (*Yoga Darshan*, *Jap Sahib*, *Gita-jo-Sar*, etc.). Among those who translated textbooks (Nandiram, Narayan Jagannath, Bulchand Kodumal and others) the only name that survives, along with those of Mirza Kalich Beg and Kauromal Chandanmal, is that of Bulchand Kodumal for his elegant diction in his translation of the *History of England*. There was an ambitious attempt made by Vassumal Jeramdas to translate Tulsidas's *Ramayana* and by Misir Jaikishin to translate fragments from the *Mahabharata*.

Four figures must be prominently mentioned in a review of Sindhi literature as Four Pillars on which the edifice of Sindhi prose rests. Three of them have already been mentioned—Mirza Kalich Beg, Kauromal Chandanmal and Dayaram Gidumal—and the fourth remains to be mentioned—Parmanand Mewaram, known as the 'Addison' of Sind for his essays and moral apologies. Mirza Sahib (1853-1929) was a translator and pioneer in many fields and an original writer as well. His *Zeenat* (1890), for instance, was the first original novel in the Sindhi language and shares with *Ajib Bheta* (1892) of Pritamdas the distinction of first creating characters in fiction and giving pictures of Sindhi life. His *Concordance* of Shah's works may also be said to be a pioneering work of scholarship and critical work in Sindhi. He wrote over three hundred works on subjects from Astronomy and Agriculture to Women and Zoology. Kauromal Chandanmal's great contribution to Sindhi literature was his edition of *Sami Ja Slok* in 1885, and his sermons in chaste Sindhi. Dayaram Gidumal's prose introductions to Mirza Sahib's translation of *Omar Khayyam* and Kauromal's *Sami Ja Slok* are the high water-marks of Sindhi prose because of their eloquence and near-sublimity of language. Parmanand Mewaram's editorship of *Jote*, a literary magazine, from the closing years of the nineteenth century to almost the middle of the twentieth, furnished the Sindhi-reading public one of the two best collections of essays in Sindhi, *Gul Phul* (the other being *Vichar*, a collection compiled out of the *D. J. Sind College Miscellany* by the present writer). Parmanand Mewaram's translation of *Imitation of Christ* (*Krist-*

ji-Peravi) is a choice work in prose, and his Dictionary of the Sindhi language (1910) is still the best. Parmanand Mewaram also brought to light another good essayist, Wadhumal Gangaram, who wrote essays on social subjects.

The fifty years, 1907-57, have been years of rapid development in Sindhi prose, specially the last ten years. Of these fifty years the first twenty may be called the period of preparation, and the succeeding thirty the period of fulfilment or the era of contemporary Sindhi Literature, coinciding as it does with the rise of New Sind. In the period of preparation, three names of masters of Sindhi prose will occur to the mind, all three scholars of Persian, Islam and Sufism, as well as lovers of Sind. Nirmaldas Fatehchand surprised the most learned Muslims by the extent of knowledge of Persian, Arabic and Islam he showed in his writings in *Aina* (magazine) and in tales like *Sarojini* and *Dalurai ji Nagri*. He is the one 'high-brow' writer in Sindhi who cannot be understood except by dippings in a dictionary. His son, Sobhraj, was a milder counterpart of his father. Hindu scholars like Haru Sadarangani ('Khadim') and Dayo Mansharamani have carried on Nirmaldas's tradition. Fateh Mahomed Sewhani, physician and savant, author of *Aftab-i-Adab* (Sun of Literature), *Abul Fazl and Faizi* and *Sirat-e-Nabi* (Traits of the Prophet), was the pioneer of that school of Muslim critical scholarship which was furthered by the founding of Muslim Adabi Society in 1931 and which has seen its culmination in the Muslim Adabi Board scholars of the type of Joyo and Nabibux Baluch, Osman Ansari and Din Mahomed Wafai. Fateh Mahomed Sewhani was a sincere worker for Hindu-Muslim unity in the field of culture and literature and his prose is lucid and trenchant.

A greater name than these in the history of Sindhi prose, a name inferior in importance to that of Mirza Kalich Beg only, is that of Hotchand Gurbuxani, whose monumental edition of Shah (1924), though left incomplete, has set the standard for all subsequent writers. Agha Sufi's edition of *Sachal Sarmast* in the thirties, Daudpota's edition of *Shah Abdulkarim* (1937), Muslim Adab Society's edition of *Gul* (1933), Shahwani's edition of Shah (1950), Mulsavi's edition of *Bedil* (1954), Nagrani's edition of *Sami* (1956), are all sequels to Gurbuxani's great work and carry prose introductions on Gurbuxani's model. Gurbuxani's

prose in *Nur Jehan* and in the Introduction to Shah (*Muqudamah Latifi*) as well as in *Lawari-ja-Lal*, in spite of being interlarded with Persian idiom, is a model for Sindhi writers.

CONTEMPORARY PROSE

Contemporary Sindhi prose sprang to its full stature under the influence of these masters thirty years ago, at a time when the four worthies mentioned above had done their life-work (Mirza died in 1929, Dayaram in 1927, Kauromal in 1916). The credit of sustaining, stabilizing and popularizing Sindhi prose in our era belongs to Jethmal Parsram (d. 1948), Bherumal Mehrchand (d. 1950) and Lalchand Amardinomal (d. 1954). Jethmal Parsram was a life-long preacher of Theosophy, Sufism and Hindu-Muslim unity, who saw Sufism even in the Sonnets of Shakespeare! He was Sind's greatest magazine-article writer and expounder of Shah's mysticism (cf. 'Tales from Shah'). His enthusiasm awoke Sind to a sense of its mystics, saints and Sufis. He had another side, a piquant side to his personality, which he showed in *Tales of Chamraposh* (Incognito) wherein he exposed the lust and greed of the rich. Jethmal was also the first socialist in Sindhi literature. Bherumal Mehrchand was Sind's grammarian and historian. He had a sound critical sense, an enormous capacity for work and a love of travelling. He edited *Johar Nazam*, first anthology of Sindhi poetry, wrote on Shah's travels, composed a novel *Anand Sundrika*, translated a number of books including detective tales, and rounded off his life's explorations and researches with his masterly *Sindhi Grammar*, *History of Sindhi Language* (1941), and *History of Sind Hindus* (1947). Bherumal Mehrchand has no mannerisms of style and wrote with ease and elegance. His work has directly or indirectly inspired a number of younger writers. For instance, that great classic of Sindhi prose, *Sair Kohistan* (Travels in Kohistan, 1942) by Allah Bachayo is a result of Bherumal Mehrchand's *Sind-jo-Sailani*, and writers on historical subjects like Chetan Mariwala (*Tarikhi Mazmoon*, *Sind-Jo-Ithas*) or writers of Histories of Sindhi Poetry or Sindhi Literature like Md. Sidik Memon and Lutfallah Badwi, or biographical and critical writers like Kalyan Advani, author of books on Shah, Sachal and Sami, and writers of biographies of Gandhiji, Nehru, etc., have learnt much from Bherumal Mehrchand (as from Gurbuxani also). Bherumal Mehrchand's son, Pribhdas, in his

translation of *Pilgrim's Progress* (*Salik-jo-safar*), has more than caught his father's prose style.

Lalchand Amardinomal was justly regarded, in India, as well as in Pakistan, as the grand old man of Sindhi Letters; and his death in 1954 was mourned by all Sindhis. This indefatigable lover of Sind and Sindhi Literature began his work as a writer by writing a biography of Prophet Mahomed, a criticism on Shah, a tale of the Hur dacoits, and a bold novel on a new plan, *Choth-jo-Chand* (Moon of the Fourth Night). By founding the Sindhi Sahit Society in 1914, in company with Sarananand Hassomal, he brought about a change in the taste of Sindhi-reading public. When he began to write the Sindhis were fascinated by either European literature or Bengali literature and Sindhi fiction was dominated either by *Gul Bakawali* (1889) and *Mumtaz Damsaz* type of medieval stories or *Chandrakanta* type novels of mystery vaults, mystery men and skeleton-in-the-cupboard type. He purified this taste and interested Sindhis in homely subjects and homely idiomatic language. He was a pioneer indeed, and his example inspired widely differing writers such as Assanand Mamtora (author of *Shair*, a romantic novel containing stirring passages), Shewak Bhojraj (author of *Ashirwad* and *Dada Shyam*, autobiographic novels), Narain Bhambhani (writer of social novels, *Vidya* 'The Widow' and others), Ram Panjwani (author of *Padma*, *Qaidi* and other sketches of men of artistic temperament and emotional sensibility) and Mangharam Malkani (who caught from Lalchand Amardinomal's *Sada Gulab* the trick of writing in the Tagore vein). His influence is seen even in essayists like Naraindas Malkani (author of *Anar Danah* 'Pomegranate Seeds') and Tirth Vasant (author of *Chingun* 'Sparks' and associate of Jethmal Parsram).

Lalchand Amardinomal's name links the last twenty years of contemporary Sindhi literature with this decade—a decade which in many respects is the most remarkable in the history of Sindhi prose. With the partition of India in 1947, it looked as if Sindhi literature was throttled, for the Hindus became refugees and the Muslims of Sind were overrun by hordes of immigrants. But an astonishing thing took place; young folk, with no experience of writing, started journals and literary societies, and clung to their language and literature with a surprising zeal. The output of literature in Sind as well as in India in the last ten years has been

simply tremendous. In Sind there has been a wholesale movement for research in Sindhi language and literature of which the standing monument is the literary periodical *Mihran*, and in India there has been a remarkable run on the social and psychological novel and the short story. These stories and novels have generally appeared in magazines (which have multiplied out of all proportion). There is at least one Sindhi weekly magazine in India (*Hindvasi*) which has subscribers running into five figures.

A curious feature of the activity in this decade has been the contribution of women to literature. The only Sindhi woman in the literary field in pre-Partition India was Guli Sadarangani, author of a translation of Tagore's *Gora* and a much-criticized novel *Ithad* (which described a Hindu girl marrying a Muslim). Nowadays women are very much to the front. The most popular writer in the Sindhi journals today is a woman-writer, Popati Hiranandani, and one of the two really successful novelists is a lady. Sundri Uttamchandani, author of *Koshan* (short stories), *Kirandar Dewaroon* (Crumbling Walls), a social novel, has a grasp of psychology, knowledge of Sindhi life, and an easy style which make her superior to every other Sindhi writer of prose fiction, except Gobind Malhi, the dominating figure in the literature of this period. The best novel of Gobind Malhi is *Pakhiara Valar Khan Vichria* (Birds separated from the Flock), a poignant story of Sindhi refugees, but the list of his novels from *Ansoo* (Tears) to *Lok Ahe Bok* (1957) is formidable. Of the story-writers, Anand Golani is perhaps the best, although there are dozens of other good writers little inferior to him, such as Sugan Ahuja, Kirat Babani, Uttam, Bihari Chabria, Chawla, Gobind Punjabi, Tara Mirchandani, Kala Prakash, Kala Reejsinghani, Ishwari Jotwani, and that versatile critic and writer on literary subjects, Jhamatmal Bhavnani, whose Sindhi rendering of *Dhola Maroo* is a welcome addition to Sindhi Literature. In Pakistan, four story writers, namely, Jamal Abro, Tanweer Abbasi, Shaikh Raz and Ayyaz Kadri, have distinguished themselves as story-writers. The other distinguished writers of this decade are Ram Panjwani, author of 'Ahe na Ahe', an effective story of an artist with faith in God, and Mangharam Malkani, playwright, essayist, and literary historian, the author of *Adabi Usool*, the only guide on literary criticism in the Sindhi language.

The two great things about the literature of the decade 1947-57

are the intense love of every writer for Sind, its language and literature (particularly Shah), and the 'progressive' outlook shown in realistic approach to men and things. For some time there was an unhealthy tendency—natural in young writers—to be 'sexy' but this tendency is now looked down upon. The Sindhi writers of today have faith in themselves, their race and language, and this faith augurs well for the future.

Children's literature in Sindhi is of recent growth. Simple stories and verses for children appeared first in the textbooks prepared for the use of primary classes, the most prolific of these compositions for the juveniles being from the pen of Kauromal Chandanmal. Some verses for children written by Bherumal Mehrchand attained popularity outside the classroom as well, particularly his rendering of an English poem addressed to Old King Time. The first really distinguished writer of children's literature in Sindhi was Parmanand Mewaram whose *Jote* was replete with entertaining and instructive reading for children. Some of his simple stories for children were gathered under the title of *Dil Bahar*. The appearance of works in English like Tagore's *Crescent Moon* and *Post Office* and Bankim's stories in the years round about the first World War led to several translations and renderings written in simple Sindhi prose and verse which were enjoyed by children.

The first regular series of articles and poems in Sindhi exclusively for children were the work of the Balkan-Ji-Bari (All India Children's Association) and its 'Dada' (Shewak Bhojraj) which for three decades has kept up its reputation for high class literature written for children—and not unoften written by children. But for this Balkan-ji-Bari many nursery rhymes and children's folklore would not be available in Sindhi today. In the closing years of the thirties an advocate, Rewachand Thadhani, made an enterprising effort to give in Sindhi Nonsense Rhymes, e. g. *Bhagat Bhambhor Jo, Babo Ahe Chor Jo* (There is a Minstrel in Bhambhor who is father of a *chor* or thief), but these rhymes are now all but unavailable. The credit for establishing a distinct department in Sindhi Literature for children goes to a Revenue Official, Fatehchand Mangatram Vaswani, who wrote under the name of his brother Melharam what has come to be known as *Sunder Sahitya*. Fatehchand's pioneering efforts have attracted many imitators. High class children's poetry in Sindhi is mainly

the work of Bewas (Kishinchand Khatri) and his pupil Dukhayal whose songs were current on the countryside in Sind and are now known to all and sundry. In the 'forties and 'fifties a number of distinguished writers in Sindhi turned their attention to writing books for children of whom the most persevering was Lalchand Amardinomal.

Works of a technical or serious nature in Sindhi are few and far between. Only one writer in Sindhi attempted to write such works, namely Mirza Kalich Beg, and his works were mostly translations. Publishers like Harising and Pokardas were enterprising enough to get works of a serious nature, especially those dealing with Medicine and Manufacture translated from the Urdu, but the literary value of these works is small. Government publications (on Agriculture, Economics, Industry, etc.) in Sindhi are of the usual dry-as-dust nature. The first writers of Sindhi Dictionaries were Europeans like Stack and Trumpp and Shirt and were followed by writers of glossaries and lexicons like Narumal and Doolamal Bulchand. So far, the most authoritative Dictionary in Sindhi is the one by that gifted and versatile writer, Parmanand Mewaram, but it was published fifty years ago and requires a thorough revision.

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TAMIL LITERATURE

T. P. MEENAKSHISUNDARAN

The Background

TAMIL is the main spoken language in the present Madras State in South India and in the Northern and Eastern districts of Ceylon. It is also the language of the emigrants from the above regions to South and East Africa, Burma, Malaya and Far East. Tamil is certainly the oldest of the Dravidian family of languages, its other important members being Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam. Among dialects also belonging to this family are Tulu, Kodagu, Toda and Kota in South India, Gondi, Oraon, Malti, Rajmahal, Kui and Kurukh in Central India and Orissa, and Brahui in distant Baluchistan. Perhaps, if Father Heras's surmise is correct, the Dravidian family of languages had its remote affiliations with the Mohen-jo-daro civilization.

Scholarly opinion holds that the earliest extant work in Tamil is a work on grammar, *Tolkappiyam*, attributed by tradition to a disciple of the sage Agastya and this refers to the Sanskrit words borrowed into Tamil. Tamil-Sanskrit contacts as seen from Sanskrit Texts must have been at least as ancient as Vararuci (fourth century B. C.). Jaina and Buddhist influences were potent in the Tamil country at one time, and religion, trade and commerce must have brought fruitfully the North and the South together. Among the results of this cross-fertilization of the two cultures were the Brahmi cave-inscriptions in the South (third century B. C.), written in a jargon of mixed Tamil and Prakrit, perhaps showing Simhalese influence.

As regards the antiquity of Tamil literature, the references to the Yavanas in the Sangam literature and the corroborative evidence furnished by the Greek writers and the Aricamedu excavations, indicate that the Sangam period should be located at about the beginning of the Christian era. This extensive literature of the Sangam Age consists of anthologies of lyrics and longer poems mostly dramatic monologues inspired by love and honour. There were, besides, the great epics : *Silappadikaram* (The Lay of the Anklet), *Manimekalai*, a Buddhist work. These along with the immortal KURAL were probably written at the close

of the Sangam Age or at the beginning of the next Age—namely the Age of Ethical Epigrams which extended into the Pallava period. The Hindu religious awakening, which began after the close of the Sangam Age as a reaction against the Jaina and Buddhist ascendency, reached its glorious fulfilment in the mystical outpourings of the heart of the Saiva Nayanmars and the Vaishnava Alvars, whose god-intoxicated poetry achieved through the magic of verbal expression what the architects and sculptors had done by raising the great Hindu temples in the South, with their heaven-pointing *gopurams*. The Nayanmars (notably Manikkavachakar and Appar) and the Alvars (notably Nammalvar and Sri Andal) taught the masses the way of devotion (bhakti) and surrender, and to this day their verses are on the lips of the devout all over the Tamil country. Presently came the writers of the literary epics, many of whom flourished during the Age of the Imperial Cholas. Kamban's *Ramayana* was the supreme achievement in this genre, and is still the most admired—and justly cherished—of Tamil classics.

Then came the Age of the Philosophical Systems. Sankara and Ramanuja, it must not be forgotten, came from what was then the Tamil land and they knew Tamil. Vedanta, Saiva Sidhanta and Sri Vaishnavism came to be systematized as coherent philosophies. Much of this literature was no doubt in Sanskrit, but in Tamil too a considerable philosophical literature arose in due course. Meykandar, Arulnandi, Umapati, Pillai Lokacharya, Vedanta Desikar and Manavala Mahamuni deserve special mention in this connection. While the old poetry continued as a living force in this age of commentary and interpretation, the *manipravala* style (a purposive mixture of Tamil and Sanskrit for popular consumption) came in handy for philosophical exposition, a notable example being Vedanta Desikar's *Rahasya-Traya-Sara*. Further, Tamil poetry began to revel in the majestic, if also exotic, rhythms wrought by the inflow of Sanskrit, and the two streams—Tamil and Sanskrit—mingled together. From this marriage of the two languages arose musical compositions, *Kirtanas*, and modern Karnatak music is but the development of these trends. Eclecticism marked the poetry of the later Saints, while the Polygars—the petty chieftains—were fed with obscene poetry. *Sthalapuranas* became popular, and folk dramas portraying the life of the depressed 'kuravas', 'pallas' and other backward

classes effected a fusion of poetry, music and action, somewhat unique in literature.

MODERN PERIOD

The Christian missionaries, anxious to speak to the children and the down-trodden, developed an interest in colloquial Tamil. Poetry getting old and insipid had not as yet found the popular rhythm and the current idiom. The nineteenth century opened with the vision of the progressive West and the Tamils attempted to translate and adapt works on modern thought, imitate literary trends and establish journalism and educational institutions modelled on the West. English replaced, on the other hand, Tamil in whatever fields of administration it held sway. The twentieth century, the age of freedom and the common man, really begins with the Surat Congress to which Subramanya Bharathi went.

Modern Tamil Literature takes its colour and tone from modern life in Tamil and also inspires the ideals of its society. The twentieth century is the century of the Asian awakening. It is characterised by the struggle for national freedom and regeneration. The finest products of modern Tamil literature are its national songs. In keeping with the native genius of Tamil literature, these national songs are full of religious fervour. They plumb the mystic depths whilst at the same time they reach the heights of universality. They are full of unalloyed kindness and love, without any personal rancour or ill-will. In their sweep they seem to touch the far-off horizon. Not that there was never any hatred and bitterness; there was always the hatred of imperialism. The revolutionary forces started as a cult of the sword crying for blood and revenge—a sacrifice on the altar of *Shakti*, with whom was identified Mother India. There was again the caricaturing of the Moderates and the Britisher in popular tunes, reminding us of the dramatic situations in popular folk-songs, depicting the age-long inertia of the Ruler and the Ruled. In some of the best poetry, however, there is no trace of any bitterness; the subtle humour is still there giving us specimens of satire.

To the Tamilian has always appealed the way of Prahlada and Saint Appar, the first great Satyagrahi of South India with his rallying cry : 'We are slaves of none; We fear no Death' against the force and power of the Pallava King. No wonder,

Mahatma Gandhi soon became the idol and in his 'war without the sword or blood' the Tamilians took an important part, from his South African days. Mahatma Gandhi and his Satyagraha, touching the very heart of Tamil-land, had inspired the Tamil songs of what may be called the Gandhian Era.

Bharati was the poet of this Nationalism and with his inborn religious mysticism, he sings of patriotism as the sincere worship of the great universal Power or Shakti of the Absolute. In his poetry he moves on easily, without any feeling of dualism or disharmony, in one and the same poem, from the love and glory of the Motherland to the worship and bliss of the Absolute. Patriotism becomes there a religious duty and the freedom movement itself becomes a dance of the Eternal, sure of its success and consummation, in that divine Drama of Shakti. The poet sings and dances with the folks—the erstwhile oppressed and the depressed—the song of liberty for all, the dance of freedom from all miseries. How prophetic this song sounds—the song composed nearly a quarter of a century before Independence really dawned on this country!

To the Tamilian, this Motherland has two aspects—one, the wider vision of Mother India—the other, the nearer vision of Tamil-land. Perhaps the marked emphasis on the latter aspect is a recent trend in the present decade of Linguistic States. The Tamil country, in the best of the national songs, connotes culture rather than a geographical unit, though this latter also cannot be forgotten in the present age.

The Tamil language rather than the Tamil country is more often deified. This is in accordance with the ancient tradition of this land. The Tamilians naturally think of their language as the very embodiment or avatar of the Absolute, Siva or Vishnu or Shakti. The love of the motherland runs in the vein of every human being, but in the heart of a Tamilian, thanks to the forces of history and tradition, it becomes a religious fervour, sometimes bordering on fanaticism, at the slightest suspicion of any encroachment of his age-long linguistic independence. To the Tamilian, the linguistic freedom to sing in his language, to be educated in his language, to argue in the law courts, to address legislatures, and to conduct his government in his language—to beat the trumpet of Tamil everywhere, as the poet puts it, is one of the most powerful and inspiring connotations of that sweet

word Freedom. He believes that it is not the narrow parochialism, but a lively universalism which prompts him to claim this freedom for his language. Unless viewed in this background, one may not grasp the full significance of, much less appreciate and admire, much of the recent poetry in praise of the glories of Tamil, though at times, unfortunately, one hears even here the nearer echoes of military jingoism.

The modern trend is to embody the ideal in the concrete. The people are its concern. 'Long live the upright Tamil; Long live the good Tamilians' sings the poet. Society, the happy society, freed from poverty, ignorance and disease—that is the ideal. 'Long live this society' is the burden of a famous song. 'If there is no food for a single individual, let us destroy the world,' cries the poet. No more the old talk of fate. This confidence in the building up of a Welfare State is as old as Tiruvalluvar. It is no longer a dream of an Utopia so beautifully described in the Tamil Puranas. It is something to be achieved by our political set-up and social reform. Herein dawns the age of the common man, the age of the Rajas having set. This is true democracy; this is true freedom and equality, this is free fraternity of equals. It is not mere political freedom that is aspired to; social and economic freedom is equally emphasised, freedom and equality of the sexes, of all castes and creeds. Poetry accepts the responsibility of building up a free society, but sometimes it descends to the level of mere venomous propaganda and Hyde Park oratory. Self-respect is glorified, but it often becomes an aggressive disrespect for others. Perhaps such aberrations are inevitable when the whole world is in the throes of a new order.

Democracy and Literature

The spread of primary education, the increasing habit of reading newspapers, the popularity of the cinema, the radio and the cheap press, the political propaganda and the adult suffrage—all these have their effect on literature. Literature is no longer for the chosen few; its appeal must extend to all. It means, at least to start with, a watering down, a lessening of the poetic sensibility. The gulf between the colloquial speech and the language of literature has to be bridged. The old metres have either to reshape themselves or go out of existence. The rhythms of folk-songs and dramas slowly gain prominence; and Bharati

has proved that they are fitting vehicles for his mystic, national, and epic poetry. Thus one has the democracy of literature well established.

The *Siddhas*—the eclectic saints of Tamil-land—were mystics and they were also forerunners of this coming change. Bharati was a mystic himself, and, as a true mystic, sees God everywhere. True to the new democracy, God has to come into intimate relationship with Man. God is my servant—a bold statement indeed—my beloved, my father, my mother, my ruler—thus sings the poet. This is as old as the Alwars, but becomes significant in this age of democracy where one has to see God in every human being—a more glorious conception of democracy or individual worth is not to be met with. The common folk have always believed, thanks to the theory of transmigration of souls, that the animals and birds are equally brothers and sisters—a belief in the democracy of all living beings and in the co-operative effort of the beast and man in a world where God and the saints move about in varied forms. The Mother-cow, the Daughter-parrot, the Brother-dog, are not rhetorical phrases, but living truths, as much to St Francis as to Bharati, to whom the barking dog, the temple bell, and the beggar's cry are all equally songs divine. His children's song breathes this spirit. The Koel song of Bharati is a great mystic allegory, which will appear bizarre and wild, unless understood in this context.

'Poetry for poetry's sake' is only a half-truth; for, the poet is a man with an ideal and a purpose. The Indian theory insists on the eternal values of Man, the Purusharthas, though the pleasure of poetry is never forgotten. Poetry is the sweet whisper of the Beloved, trying to win her lover to the eternal values. Therefore Tamil poetry never lost its high seriousness, its religious fervour, if one may use that term. The Tamil literature of the modern age has all the enthusiasm of this fervour for the regeneration of society in general and of the common man in particular. This has a tendency to engender more heat than light, and sometimes propaganda parades as literature. In Indian literature, there is always the danger of didacticism assuming the mask of poetry, and of the hypnotic appeal of the slogans—the *mantras* of the modern age. Freedom, Equality, Love, Patriotism, Mother land, and Mother-tongue—these concepts, beautiful in themselves, lend themselves to this abuse. Because of this curious

situation, many poems are widely read and sung, not because of their poetic inspiration, but because of their popular appeal or fashionable cry. Sentimentality and melodramatic appeals in the guise of poetry easily mislead people. The cult of the common man and the poetry of the familiar things do not mean the glorification of vulgarity and the popularisation of lower passions. In this age of cheap Press this danger threatens to drive out of the market all other kinds of literature.

Reference was made to the rhythm of speech. There is a demand for writing as one speaks. The pedantic language has to die a natural death. On the other hand, except in the speeches of the characters in a drama, the varieties of regional and social dialects cannot but create another Babel of languages. The radio, the press, political oratory, and the spread of education, fortunately, tend to promote an approximation towards a standard language. Therefore, the language of modern Tamil poetry is neither the classical literary language nor the language of current dialects, though stories are often sung in dialects and verses are composed in imitation of the old folk-songs. Perhaps this is also a continuation of an older tradition of Alliarasaani Maalai and Desingu Raajan Katai. These are to a certain extent popular; but the movement for colloquialism is not as strong in Tamilland as, for instance, in the Andhra Desha. Free verse and poetic prose are also in some vogue—probably due to the Western influence.

The literary revival is at once a revolt against the recent past and a revival of the glory of the distant past. The old stories of Panchali, of Bilhana and of the Buddha, are retold with a message for the present. These stories are so narrated as to emphasise the new ideals of the modern age—the ideals of freedom and patriotism, of heroic womanhood and living religion.

Another contemporary trend in literature is humour. The old literature, except for the clown in the drama, was serious and serene. The modern type of humour is largely the result of journals with their amusing comments on current events and personalities. Its influence on current literature is not inconsiderable. Stories, verses and essays are spiced with wit and humour. Real humour can become one with the spirit of unselfish detachment of the truly great, even amidst their sufferings. Kavimani, even when overpowered by disease, develops the objective outlook

of the seer and contemplates, with a humour all his own, the rash on his body as so many presents of pearls and rubies from his beloved King of Bursting Boils.

This century is also known for its solicitude for children. The cry for their education becomes more and more insistent—an education in their own mother-tongue, full of song and play, full of creative activity and practical knowledge. Text-books graded to suit their physical and mental age reveal the new but hidden possibilities of the language—a language with its old tradition of children's poetry. Some of the nursery rhymes and songs written for children are gems of real literary beauty. Here again Bharati and Kavimani have shown the way.

Influence of Journalism

The influence of journalism on literature cannot be ignored. Dailies, weeklies, and even monthlies may not be literature, but they, in more than one sense, form the workshop for all kinds of literature as the vehicle of modern thought and have provided to many modern authors their first literary apprenticeship. The Tamil dailies have the onerous task of expressing in popular Tamil, the latest events, thoughts, inventions and discoveries telegraphed probably a few minutes before the publication of their daily issue.

The distinguished novelist 'Kalki' had pointed out that before the late T. V. Kalyana Sundara Mudaliar entered journalism in the cause of National Freedom, the newspapers used to indulge in pedantic compounds derived from Sanskrit, and how, as a result of his influence, the language of these journals became true to the native genius of Tamil. There is today a movement of the Purists to eschew all foreign words, including Sanskrit terms, which is the natural and inevitable swing of the pendulum to the other extreme. It has, however, helped to reveal the untapped resources of the language. Therefore, it is not fair to characterise the movement as communal or anti-Sanskritic. It is not a mere negation but aims at a positive improvement of the language. But, as in other spheres, the golden mean holds the day. Colloquialism and slang sometimes invade journalism, but these do not leave any permanent impression. It is, however, too early to say whether Tamil journalism has found its equilibrium.

LITERATURE, A PROFESSION

This brings out another important trend in Tamil literature of the 20th century. Literature becomes a profession—no more a hobby. Even the poet seeks employment, not as the court-poet but as the versifier in the Talkies' Studio or elsewhere. Those who pay the piper will call for the tune. Shakespeare, however, remained the great genius he was, despite this kind of pressure. The sculptor shapes the hardest rock to his taste; and the writer likewise takes the public taste as his raw material and chisels out of it new beautiful art-forms. Even in the days of so-called literary freedom of the saints and seers, the writer never closed his eyes to his environment. The problem of literature is thus not entirely uninfluenced by questions of economics. While the poet is no longer ruled by the caprice of his individual patron, he can hardly afford to ignore the taste of the general reading public. The temptation of playing to the gallery remains, but there is no longer any danger of poetic sycophancy. Fortunately, things are not as bad as one may expect, because of the force of enlightened public opinion. Writers in modern age tend to be the architects of a new order rather than slaves of an old fashion. It is a happy sign that political leaders like the last Governor-General of India, Sri Rajagopalachari, are also distinguished men of letters.

SCIENTIFIC OUTLOOK

This age is pre-eminently the age of science probing into the mysteries and hidden powers of Nature. Interest in science is becoming universal and the ideals of art cannot remain entirely unaffected by it. In fact, science has become the ideal of some artists in this age. As Constable states: 'Painting is a science and should be pursued as an enquiry into the laws of Nature. Why then may not landscape be considered as a branch of Natural Philosophy, of which pictures are but experiments?' If so, one wonders whether some short stories and verses may not be just such experiments. Though the common text-books of science are the very opposite of literature, certain popular expositions like those of Tyndall, Huxley, or Russell do reach literary heights. Such works are rare in Tamil, but not altogether absent. 'Love in the Plant World' and the 'Pial Chemistry' by Sri Rajagopalachari are easily the best, but they are mere introductions

to the great world of science. 'Paramanu Puranam' of the late Prof Rajeswari describes the science and history of atom in such a manner as to read like a regular Puranam, as Dr K. S. Krishnan puts it. There are popular expositions on other modern subjects as well which have won University and State Government Prizes. That the Tamil language is sufficiently flexible and can lend itself to the requirements of scientific exposition may be seen in the pages of the current 'Tamil Encyclopaedia'.

This scientific interest is but one aspect of a wider trend of modern rationalism, of which another aspect is the wide-spread onslaught on the superstitions and meaningless ceremonies, caste arrogance and religious intolerance. Unfortunately, some reformers mistakenly identify literature with everything they attack, especially when their antagonists quote and interpret Tamil literature to suit their own purpose. The value of the myth, the correct approach to literature and its language of emotion, the value of art, the distinction between a scientific or historical fact and literary or artistic truth, are not easily understood, and, as a result, enjoyment of literature threatens to be vitiated by this prevalent atmosphere of fog and confusion.

Criticism and Essay

Hence the necessity for a clear grasp of the underlying principles of literary criticism and art. In this age of an ever-widening gulf between the ancient order and the modern age, between science and religion, between history and tradition, between rationalism and literature, the late T. V. Kalyana Sundara Mudaliar, who is the father of modern Tamil prose, threw out a bridge spanning this yawning gulf. Swami Vipulananda is another great name. T. K. Chitambaranatha Mudaliar relies on his intuition in interpreting the Tamil poets and making their poems live before us. Bharati's notes are like lightning flashes illuminating the neglected and forgotten regions of beauty in nature and literature. His criticism is subjective and comes with all the force of his vision and experience. Kavimani and others follow him in giving expression to their poetic experience of Tamil literature in their verses—a persisting modern trend. Maraimalai Adigal has given us a new kind of appreciation of old poetic works, completely identifying himself with those works and applying the principles of criticism laid down by

Addison and Macaulay, in his easy flowing and sweet style, which, though marred by his strong prejudices, in a way makes his writings a good piece of literature, being the expression of his personality.

The essays form a class by themselves as literature, though as varied as life. The journals were formerly full of them, before the short story came into vogue. Of late, the Radio talk has taken the place of the essay. The Radio offers a wider platform extending over all the lands where the Tamils live. Musical events, talks, symposiums, forums, poets' circles and dramas have all to follow the schedule of time, and this is a new experience for authors who had till now no such restriction. The audience is not before the eye to offer opportunities for adjusting his art according to the response. Talking in isolation inside a closed room to the inert machine chills all enthusiasm. The speaker has to rely entirely on his imagination. The listeners will most probably be seated within a family circle and the tone has to be that of a table talk—familiar but dignified, popular but not vulgar. This kind of literature should be understood as it is heard. There is nothing but the voice and the word in the Radio drama to differentiate the speeches and personalities of characters, the varying scenes and emotions, or to suggest the gestures and actions, the scenery and the environment, the beginning and the end of scenes, or the entrance and exit of characters. The sound symbolism, the suggestive power of the spoken word and its subtle modulations, the varying diction and sentence structure, the mystery of music, apart from gross mannerisms, are all discovered anew and used, revealing in this process the potentialities of Tamil. Homer may nod, but not the artist on the air. He has to capture the attention or the switch will be off at the other end.

Drama

The drama proper—the *Drisya Kavya*—is as old as man. In Tamil it is harmony of music, dance and poetry. Unlike Malabar and other places, there seems to be no attempt at bringing back to life the old 'Street Drama' except in its special form of 'Bhagavatamela'. Sundaram Pillai's *Manonmaniam*, a poetic drama with its interlude of a long-drawn but excellent poetry of Sivakami Caritai, could not have been

intended for the stage. People are continuing to write dramas in verse—in *akaval* metre—though not reaching the excellence of *Manonmaniam.* The grand old man, Sambanda Mudaliar, has written more than fifty plays, which are all easy to act, though as literature they may not rank very high. His dramas are healthy, free of that naked realism and sex appeal which seem to rule the stage elsewhere. Sometimes propaganda, not the healthy suggestion of reform and new outlook as in *Katarin Verri* and other dramas of Pavalar, but blatant propaganda is indulged in, with impromptu speeches, according to the taste of the actor, on the events of the day—an inheritance from the speeches of the clown in the street dramas of old. Dramas ridiculing religious tradition and caricaturing Puranic stories and other literature are popular in certain kinds of political-cum-social conferences. If these could aim at becoming real literature by reaching a universal level and restraining the impulse to play to the gallery of the immediate present, they may one day compete with Shaw and Ibsen. Vehement vituperation, repulsive propaganda, base sex appeal, and vulgar wit sometimes take the place of healthy satire, powerful suggestion, poetic sensibility and subtle humour.

True to the times, the plays show more and more a concern for the common man as the hero. The tradition of the dramatic troupe of children is not yet dead. Music and dance still form an integral part of our drama. The oratory is effective in this art, though not unoften the drama degenerates into melodrama. This is not the fault of the audience but of the people at the helm of affairs. That people are not hankering after sex and horror is shown by the success of the play on Avvai, the Tamil poetess, and on Raja Raja, the Chola Emperor, which embody concrete ideals of Tamil poetry and the Tamil people, though these dramas sometimes project forth the present into the past.

The cinema has not killed the drama but its appeal is naturally more powerful and wide-spread. The trick of the camera and the magic of projection make possible the vivid representation of even the *ashta siddhis* of the yogis. The supernatural, once again, comes into the drama as is seen in the adaptation of the story of the Manohara of Sambanda Mudaliar on the silver screen, where nothing is impossible to portray. No more are the

Puranic and mythological stories eschewed in preference to social plays. There is another recent trend reminding one of the abstractions of modern painting and of the old heroes and heroines of folk-tales—Nalla Tangal, the Good sister, etc.—and as a result of this, the whole story is looked upon as centring round the abstract and ideal relationship of sister-in-law or mother. Humorous hits as separate episodes used to be pasted on to the original story, but, fortunately, they are getting now-a-days well integrated into the original story itself. Dance and music are the very life of the Tamil silver screen overflowing with ornate speech and over-acting. The same trends noted in the drama are naturally found in the talkies.

There is a movement for restoring Tamil music to its proper place. Till the last decade, the musical entertainments never had more than one or two Tamil songs. The new movement has brought back from oblivion many ancient Tamil musical compositions, once popular in this country. It has also encouraged new compositions. The best poets of the modern age have all given us a rich feast. There is, however, a complaint that these songs do not relate to ordinary work-a-day world. There is a mushroom growth of new compositions on all subjects, and though their language may be Tamil, the music is not South Indian, or Carnatic or Tamil; nor are they of a high order, whatever be their school of music. The popular tunes of the cinema, mostly Hindusthani tunes—not the classical, but the new-fangled ones—can hardly be called music or poetry, unless one thinks of them as nursery rhymes, the *dadada* songs, and *udaiyadappa* tunes, reminding us forcibly that most of the audience relapse into childhood when in the cinema house, enjoying adventures reminiscent of fairy tales.

Novel and Short Story

The novel is the epic in prose of the modern age, though very few novels rise to that stature. Translations and adaptations of foreign novels are quite common in Tamil. Some of these translations are of western classics, like the novels of Tolstoy and Hardy and some of the novels in other Indian languages. The translation of the Bengali novel *Ananda Math* is as old as the present century. Unfortunately, not all the translations or adaptations are of healthy classics. Even an eminent writer like Maraimalai Adigal

has adapted the story of *The Soldier's Wife,* though in his own way. Sherlock Holmes appears as a Tamil character; and detective stories, both original and in translation, are popular.

On the whole, what is true of the drama and the short story is true of the novel also. There are also historical novels, specially those of 'Kalki', weaving a romantic story with graphic descriptions of the Pallava and Chola empires and their peoples. The psychological novel, with its skeleton in the cupboard of the consciousness of sin, exemplifies the new experimental outlook in art, perhaps not satisfying to all. The Freedom Movement has given rise to a few novels much more significant and revealing than historical novels. Perhaps here too one may include, for want of space, Utopias or 'shape of things to come', as also the imaginary flight of Bharati in his "chariot of the mind'.

The short stories are, as it were, the sonnets in prose. Here again one meets with translations from Tagore and other Indian writers, as also from western writers. Many of the short stories in Tamil are being translated and enjoyed in English and other Indian languages. Short stories, as stories for the young, had been written by Maraimalai Adigal and others. Bharati had given us *Navatantrakkatthaikil,* more on the old model, though with a modern bias, and with his romantic outlook. Short story as a distinct art with its modern technique begins to establish itself with V. V. S. Aiyar. It also becomes a vehicle of new thoughts and an ally of new movements. In Putumai-Pittan it begins to compete with poetry; so full of charm are his idiom, rhythm, suggestions, and outlook. Perhaps no other kind of literature in Tamil is produced in such great quantity and with such indifference to quality. The remarks on the language and theme in general of the drama and novel apply equally well to those of the short stories.

Recent trends in Tamil literature are thus seen to be democratic in their modern bias, developing from ever-growing contact with other parts of India and the world at large, especially the West, and reflecting the scientific and rationalist spirit. Enlivened by the new awakening, modern Tamil writers plumb with courage and confidence the unknown depths of the Tamil language and joyfully bring to the surface its magical powers of suggestion, imagination, humour, pathos, and poetry, though occasionally throwing out some dead matter, smelling foul.

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TELUGU LITERATURE

K. RAMAKOTISWARA RAU

The Background

Telugu is spoken by a population of over thirty millions in South India. The Telugu are the second largest linguistic group in the Indian Union. The terms 'Telugu' and 'Andhra' are interchangeable. The language is 'Telugu Bhasha' or 'Andhra Bhasha' and the country 'Telugu Desam' or 'Andhra Desam'. Since the time of Bishop Caldwell who wrote his *Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Languages* a hundred years ago, the tendency among scholars has been to divide the languages of India into 'Aryan' and 'Dravidian' and to include Telugu in the 'Dravidian' group, along with Kannada, Tamil and Malayalam. From this theory of linguistic separateness was evolved that of ethnic differences.

But according to the late Dr. C. Narayana Rao and some other scholars, Andhra was one of the Prakrits—the Paisachi in which Gunadhya wrote his *Brihat Katha*, and Hala, the Satavahana Emperor of Andhra, composed his *Gatha Saptasati*. Sanskrit words and words derived from Sanskrit have formed so large a part of the written as well as spoken Telugu for several centuries, that any effort to employ the 'pure Dravidian' words only must lead to utter unintelligibility. This is true of Kannada also. These two language groups occupy a position, in between the North and the South, which enables them to effect a synthesis of Indian Culture.

Long before Nannaya commenced his rendering of the Sanskrit *Mahabharata* into Telugu, there was a large volume of literature, mostly song and fable. But with Nannaya began 'classical' Telugu literature. This literature flourished under the patronage of kings and noblemen, and the poet was held in high esteem all over the land. From the 11th to the 15th centuries, the Telugu poets brought within the reach of their people the wisdom and the poetry of the Sanskrit epics (*Purana* and *Itihasa*). Even today the books that largely shape the lives of the Telugus are the *Andhra Mahabharatam* of Nannaya, Tikkana and Yerraprag[1] and

[1]The 'Kavitrayam', the three poets who rendered different portions of the epic.

and the *Andhra Bhagavatam* of Potana. Srinatha's *Naishadham* is, in some ways, the most valuable contribution to Telugu literature of the period.

During the days of the Vijayanagara Empire, from the 15th to the 17th centuries, a new type of independent composition—the *Prabandha*—was evolved. Peddana, poet-laureate at the Court of Krishnadeva Raya, led the way with his *Manucharitra*. He was followed by the Emperor Krishnadeva Raya, Ramarajabhushana, Tenali Ramakrishna, Pingali Surana and others. The *Prabandha* is a long tale in verse and prose, centring round the lives of a regal or divine hero and heroine of ancient or medieval India. With its skill of narration and description, its imaginative exuberance and its variety of metrical forms, the Telugu *Prabandha* is unique among Indian literatures. At the Courts of the Telugu Nayak Kings of Tanjore and Madura, Telugu literature became closely allied to song, dance and drama. Since Telugu words are *ajanta* (vowel-ending) and are easily interwoven with Sanskrit words, the language is sweet and eminently suited to music.

The Andhra contribution, through Sanskrit, is noteworthy. The writers on Poetics—Vidyanatha and Jagannatha Panditaraya, the commentators—Prince Kataya Vema of Kondavidu and Mallinatha Suri, and the devotees—Leela Suka and Narayana Tirtha, played an important role in the development of an all-India culture. The composers in Telugu—Kshetraya, Annamacharya and Tyagaraja—and the exponents of the dance-drama of Kuchipudi have won recognition in other linguistic areas.

The Pioneer

It was on the banks of the Godavari, and at the Court of the East Chalukyan monarch Raja Raja or Raja-Mahendra, that the first great classic in Telugu—the *Andhra Mahabharatam* of Nannaya—was composed. That was a thousand years ago. By a strange destiny, there was renascence of Telugu literature at the same dear spot[2] towards the end of the last century. Viresalingam, Chilakamarti Lakshminarasimhan and Vasuraya Kavi relit the torch. The spread of British rule had resulted in an eclipse of the traditional culture. But the establishment of

[2]Rajahmundry or Rajamahendravaram

colleges and universities led to a fruitful contact with a differnt type of civilisation. The literature and science of the West brought a new vision to the intellectuals of Andhra, as they did to the other linguistic groups in India. After the first shock of this impact, Telugu scholars and poets brought up in the new atmosphere enriched the literature of the mother-tongue.

In many ways Viresalingam was a pioneer. Primarily a social reformer and a rebel against age-long conventions, he wielded his new weapon of a lucid prose style in the service of the causes which he championed. His predominant trait was a burning sense of social wrong. No ancient institution, no popular religious belief, was too sacred for his iconoclastic zeal. To him was not vouchsafed the gift of sympathetic understanding of contemporary life which we admire in his younger friend and fellow-townsman, Lakshminarasimham. But literary biography and criticism, drama and novel, scientific and political essays, journalism and pamphleteering, and autobiography—all owe their origin to him.

The age produced other giants like Vedam Venkataraya Sastri of Nellore, D. Krishnamacharlu of Bellary, the twin-poets Tirupati Sastri and Venkata Sastri of Masulipatam, and Gurazada Appa Rao of Vizianagaram.[3] Appa Rao was the forerunner of the great song-writers of the next generation—Basavaraju Appa Rao and Adivi Bapiraju, who are no more, and Nanduri Subba Rao. Tirupati Venkata Kavulu rescued Telugu poetry from the decadent classicism of the early nineteenth century ; they brought the Muse from out of the Courts of chieftains and the coteries of Pandits. And they made possible the lyric outpouring of Rayaprolu Subba Rao and D. V. Krishna Sastri. Their *Buddha Charitram* is a long poem of outstanding excellence, with its limpid verse and its rich imagery. Their dramas based on the Mahabharata story have stood the test of time.

Lyrical Poetry

The influence of the nationalist movement of 1905 and of Bengali literature as represented by Bankim Chandra and Rabindranath was felt somewhat earlier by the Telugus than

[3]In the Visakhapatnam District, not to be confused with the capital of the great southern Empire of that name.

by the other language groups of South India. Thus, while the generations of Viresalingam was in love with the English literature of the 17th to the 19th centuries and occasionally turned to the Sanskrit classics for inspiration, the generation of Krishna Sastri was profoundly influenced by European literature of the 19th and early 20th centuries and the contemporary literature in Bengali.

The young men who were at college during the First World War produced their best work between 1915 and 1935. These two decades in our literary history may be likened to the ages of Pericles in Athens, of Elizabeth in England, or of Bhoja or Krishnadeva Raya in India. Lyrical poetry, romantic song, the novel, the short story and the play were the main branches of literature which these writers adorned. Lyrical poetry, in a special measure, was their favourite mode of expression. In classical Indian poetry the personality of the poet rarely obtrudes on the reader's attention. The offering of devotion to the Lord by the *Bhaktas* (devotees) in the epics and the *Satakas* (Centuries of verse) indicates the nearest approach to subjective poetry. A revelation of the poet's personal joys and sorrows and of his reactions to the movements of thought and emotion around him marks a new phase in our literature.

The quest of the Beloved, who is at once the perfection of loveliness and the guiding star to the shrine of Love, was the main pre-occupation of these lyrical poets (Bhavakavis). To them woman is an ethereal being; she is akin to a streak of lightning, the dewy dawn, or the white foam dancing on the waves of the ocean. With their idealisation of the object of love and their haunting description—more the graces of her mind and soul than the charms of her fleshy frame—they raised Telugu poetry to the regions of the sublime.

Platonic love is the theme of Rayaprolu Subba Rao's *Trinakankanam* and *Swapnakumaram*, and of Abburi Ramakrishna Rao's *Mallikamba*. The intense longing for a supremely fair denizen of heaven on the part of a lowly earth-born lover, and the agony born of despair, form the dominant note of Krishna Sastri's *Urvasi* and other lyrics. The desire for a union of kindred minds and kindred souls is reflected in Sivasankara Sastri's *Hridayesvari*. In *Deepavali* Vedula Satyanarayana Sastri makes a grim resolve to pursue to the uttermost 'this pilgrimage across

the ocean of love'. Nayani Subba Rao fears that his frail bark might go to pieces in midstream; but then, the planks will serve for his funeral pyre. Almost alone among this group of poets, Nayani ends on a note of triumph. His love is fulfilled and, at long last, he succeeds in 'linking heaven and earth'.

THE SAHITI SAMITI

Rayaprolu Subba Rao was the foremost among these poets. But it was Sivasankara Sastri, the founder of the *Sahiti Samiti*, who drew these and many more into a literary fellowship, like the later *Ravikiran Mandal* of Maharashtra and the *Geleyara Gumpu* of Karnataka. Scholar in Sanskrit and a keen student of contemporary English literature and the literatures of three or four Indian languages, Sivasankara Sastri became the 'Anna Garu'—elder brother—of the poets, short story writers and literary essayists of Andhra. The movement in favour of the spoken Telugu as the medium of literary expression was sponsored by Gidugu Ramamurti Pantulu, but the *Sahiti Samiti* brought success to the movement by the actual adoption of this medium. Whatever of enduring worth was produced in verse, song and prose for a quarter of a century before the Second World War must be set down to the credit of these gifted members of the *Samiti* and their admirers and followers.

THE SONG-WRITERS

Then there were those who could have written verse, but preferred song. It seems but yesterday—but it was forty years ago—that the cousins Basavaraju Appa Rao and Nanduri Subba Rao were in the Law College and the Christian College in Madras. They were madly in love with the songs and verse-tales of Gurazada Appa Rao and recited them with feeling. They soon started singing their own songs to small groups of eager fellow-students and moved them to tears. The *Selayeti Ganamu* (Song of the Rill) of Basavaraju Appa Rao and the *Yenki Patalu* of Nanduri Subba Rao took the public by storm. Today these songs are on everybody's lips. Appa Rao urged that one should pass through sorrow so that 'the heart might become tender' and 'the sense of ego wiped out'. Subba Rao's rural lovers, Yenki and Naidu Bava, are as soft and gentle, as passionate and devoted as any hero and heroine of princely

romances. When the lover accosts Yenki with the simple query :

'Where dost thou dwell, O Maiden of Light?'

the artless maiden answers :

'In thy shadow shall I build my palace.'

Adivi Bapiraju,[4] painter, poet and song-writer, who also won distinction later through his short stories and novels, was guided by Prof Oswald Couldery, Principal of the Government College, Rajahmundry. The companionship of this cultured Englishman, who himself painted and wrote verse and short stories in English, was a beneficent influence in the lives of Bapiraju, Kavikondala Venkata Rao, Damerla Rama Rao, the celebrated painter, and other youths of that period. Prof Couldery is to modern Andhra what C. P. Brown of the Civil Service was to the Andhras a hundred years ago. While Bapiraju's genius is versatile, his favourite mode of expression is the song, vibrant with emotion and lifting the listener to high altitudes even like the river Godavari which, in a song of his, 'shoots up to the skies'.

VISWANATHA AND PINGALI

Viswanatha Satyanarayana, in his *Kohilamma Pendli* (The Bridal of the Koil) and *Kinnerasani*, made song the vehicle of romantic tales of Nature in her tender moods, while Duvvuri Rami Reddi employed elegant verse for the same purpose. Among the makers of the renascence, Viswanatha holds a high place. He has achieved eminence in nearly every form of literary expression—classical verse, romantic song, the lyric, the novel, the short story and the critical essay. There is richness and vigour allied to ruggedness in his writings. As 'Giri-Kumara' he wrote love poetry of great charm; in his *Andhra Prasasti* the poetry of patriotism attains the dignity of literature.

Pingali Lakshmikantam and Katuri Venkateswara Rao began their literary career with a slender volume of verse—*Tolakari*—commended by Dr C. R. Reddy. The promise of the early years found fulfilment in *Soundara Nandam*, a long, sustained Kavya, recalling the age of the Buddha. Perfection of form and nobility of sentiment have made *Soundara Nandam* a classic *par excellence*.

[4]He passed away in 1952.

Thus Love and Nature were the main themes of the poets of this period. But patriotism, more especially during the days of struggle against foreign rule, was a powerful factor in their emotional make-up. They were dreamers of dreams with a vision as wide as the universe. Their sympathies were extended to common men and women, though they did not actually share their lives. In diction and in metre, they sought to bridge the gulf between the classical and the popular, i. e. , the *margi* and the *desi*.

The Swing to the Left

After 1935, there was a swing to Leftism in Telugu poetry. Srirangam Srinivasa Rao ('Sri Sri') led a revolt against the Romantic movement which commenced with Rayaprolu Subba Rao. A new world is in the making, sings Srinivasa Rao, a world in which sweat and toil must lead to the vindication of the rights of the worker in field and factory. There is no sense in celebrating the glory of the Taj Mahal; think rather of the forced labour which made the Taj possible. Soft sentiment and the enraptured worship of Nature in her gracious moods can no longer form the themes of poetry. The new group came under the spell of the Impressionists and Surrealists of the West, and sought to break away from conventional verse-forms, including the *gita* metre so largely employed by the Romantics. Free verse is their favourite medium. The prevailing economic discontent and the disillusionment following on the emergence of political freedom are to be canalised for the calss-war But alongside of these are others like Mallavarapu Visweswara Rao and Pilaka Ganapati Sastri who are wedded to the Rayaprolu-Krishna Sastri tradition. Buchi Sundararama Sastri, a direct disciple of Venkata Sastri, displayed in his *Panchavati* unique gifts as a poet of devotion.

The Neo-Classicists

Within recent years, one notices the beginnings of a new movement, the return to classicism If the Leftists and Surrealists rebelled against the romanticism of the earlier decades of this century, the neo-classicists like Nanduri Krishnamacharlu, Jandhyala Papayya Sastri and G. Joshua are questioning the value of the Surrealism of the years from 1935 to 1950. Harmony, instead of strife, is their ideal. The 'chaotic' free verse of

'Pattabhi' and 'Arudra' makes no appeal to the neo-classicists. In the post-War an equilibrium has to be achieved between matter and spirit, between idealism and realism. Krishnamacharlu and his fellow poets claim that they are effecting this reconciliation. The Surrealists made light of the Romantics and spoke of them as 'escapists'. The neo-classicists in their turn are asking whereto the persistent preaching of a class-war will lead. The poverty and the misery of the people are undeniable, but how will hymns of hate alleviate that misery? Is a class-war inevitable, and is it the function of poetry to serve as the handmaid of a political and economic revolution? These are the questions being posed today, and the neo-classicists are anxious to regain for poetry its dignity as the symbol of all that is beautiful and true. This return to classicism is also emphasised by Viswanatha Satyanarayana writing an epic with the story of Rama as the background , and Gadiyaram Sesha Sastri choosing Shivaji as the hero of his *Siva Bharatam*. These two are likely to stand out as the epic creations of our day, fashioned in the classical mould.

THE SHORT STORY

The short story, in its modern form of a cameo of the contemporary scene, originated with Gurazada Appa Rao more than fifty years ago. But its growth in subsequent years and its elevation to its present high place in literature is due to a band of writers headed by Chinta Dikshitulu. Dikshitulu's stories, in their sympathetic portrayal of men and women and in their kindly humour, are very similar to the stories of Masti Venkatesa Iyengar of Karnataka. Though from neighbouring areas, one did not know of the work of the other, they both are masters of the art which conceals art. Their narration is simple, almost as if the story tells itself. And yet the end seems inevitable. Munimanikyam Narasimha Rao is a master of the type of story which depicts domestic life in middle-class families. He invariably succeeds in developing the humour of particular situations. His heroine, Kantam, is the gentle, affectionate housewife who yet has will of her own. She often wonders if the husband is as clever as herself! Gudipati Venkatachalam writes with great power about the indignity suffered by women. He is a believer in stark realism, particularly in the treatment of sex. He sometimes

mistakes actualism for realism and fills his stories with details which mar the artistic effect. The number of successful short story writers in Telugu is very large, and it is on the increase. Among women writers Kanaparti Varalakshmamma, Illindala Saraswati Devi and Malati Chandur are the most notable. A recognition of the high level of achievement in the realm of the short story in Telugu is the award of the second prize in a world-wide competition to P. Padmaraju three years ago. Adivi Bapiraju's stories usually centre round the lives of the artists and their vision of beauty. The 'Stone Maiden', a dream-picture of the love of a sculptor for a dancer, is easily his masterpiece.

The Novel

Viresalingam was the author of the first novel in Telugu. His *Rajasekhara Charitram*, published during the eighties of the last century, is the picture of a middle-class Brahmin family. The head of the household goes through many vicissitudes, but emerges victorious at the end. The novel was translated into English by an Englishman. Viresalingam's successor in the field was Chilakamarti Lakshminarasimham whose historical novels became very popular. But his fame rests mainly on his novel of contemporary Andhra life, *Ramachandra Vijayam*. His excellent translation of Romesh Dutt's *Lake of Palms* made the Andhras of that generation familiar with Bengali life and aspirations. This good work was continued by Venkata Parvateesvara Kavulu through his renderings of several Bengali novels, including Bankim Chandra's masterpieces. Then there was a diversion to detective fiction of small literary value, till Vunnava Lakshminarayana wrote his *Mala Palli*[5] (1921), the prose-epic of the Gandhian era.

Viswanatha Satyanarayana and Adivi Bapiraju run a close race in the affections of the Andhras as the two greatest novelists of modern times. The Andhra University split a prize (1934) when it had to judge between Viswanatha's *Vett Padagalu* (The Thousand Hoods) and Bapiraju's *Narayana Rao*. Viswanatha is a lover of traditional ways of life, and his novels, particularly *Veyi Padagalu*, are chronicles of a society which is fast disappearing. He records, for the benefit of future generations, the manners

[5]This novel is being translated into Hindi and will soon be published by the Sahitya Akademi.—*Ed.*

and customs, and the modes of thought and feeling of the several strata of society. Working on a very wide canvas, and displaying encyclopaedic knowledge, Viswanatha somehow fails to achieve a unity of design : the many strands do not get properly integrated. Bapiraju, lover of beauty and an optimist, always ends on a note of joy and fulfilment. Artistically, his work is more finished.

Another important novelist is Nori Narasimha Sastri. His *Narayana Bhattu* and *Rudrama Devi* depict the life of East Chalukyan and Kakatiya times, and are successful as socio-historical novels. Of the younger writers, the most distinguished is 'Buchi Babu'.[6] His *Chivaraku Migiledi* (All that Remains) mirrors the conflicts of the modern industrial age, the fret and the fever of suburban life, and the ironies of the relation between the sexes. In characterisation, dialogue and the technique of narration, Buchi Babu's work marks a distinct advance, in spite of an undercurrent of cynicism.

Novels from the European languages and from Bengali and Hindi, especially those of Saratchandra and Prem Chand, appear in large numbers. But the translations, judged as Telugu prose, are not of high quality.

PLAYWRIGHTS

The modern stage-play, as distinguished from the open-air dance-drama of previous centuries, was brought into being by cultured amateurs in important towns. Prose, verse and song were largely employed and the themes were Puranic, historical or social. Andhra produced great actors like Hari Prasad Rao, T. Raghavachari and Sthanam Narasimha Rao. But after the passing away of the famous playwrights, D. Krishnamacharlu, Vedam Venkataraya Sastri, Panuganti Narasimha Rao and Gurazada Appa Rao, no successful full-length plays were written. One always felt, at the end of a drama—'What fine acting but the play is poor !' Viswanatha's *Nartana Sala* and Veluri Chandrasekharam's *Kanchanamala* are good literary pieces, but they have not found favour with the actors and the public.

The one-act play, owing to its quickness of action and its entertainment value at social and literary functions, has stolen a march over the full-length play. And even the one-act play is

[6]S. V. Subba Rao

neglected in favour of the cinema. But there are eminent writers of one-act plays—Chief Justice Rajamannar, Narla Venkateswara Rao, Maddu Krishna and Acharya Atreya—whose contribution to the modern stage-play is very valuable. They have given us plays which read well as literature, and are also stage-worthy.

Literature of Knowledge

The literature of knowledge, as contrasted with creative writing in prose and verse, has made a considerable headway in Telugu. Books on politics, science, sociology, economics and history have attained a high standard. The works on history by K. V. Lakshmana Rao, C. Virabhadra Rao, Bhavaraju Krishna Rao and Somasekhara Sarma deserve to rank as literature.

The autobiography of Sri T. Prakasam is a moving human document, the revelation of a great personality. The style is simple, vigorous, and arresting. High-class journalism has been a great source of encouragement to aspiring writers in Telugu. Several periodicals have published creative writing, which later appeared as volumes of verse, story and song. The greatest of Andhra journalists, the late Sri Mutnuti Krishna Rao of the *Krishna Patrika*, wrote splendid prose. His essays on literature, philosophy and art are collected in *Samiksha*.

Latest Phase

I shall conclude with a survey of the literary scene today. Poems of fine quality continue to appear. A poem by Bal Gangadhar Tilak—*Aa Rojulu* (Those Days)—expresses the nostalgia for the life and the visions of early youth, and ends with the significant thought that life in the present is worth living, if only to recall the fragment memories of those years. Pantula Srirama Sastri, a talented writer of short stories and radio-plays, tries his hand at a verse-tale, *Manavudu*. This is a powerful piece, as narrated by a burglar who passes through strange mental experiences within the space of an hour, and, without intending it, becomes the saviour of the lady of the house who was committing suicide. Vidwan Viswam's long poem, *Penneti Pata*, is a picture of rural life in Rayalaseema. The poet reproduces the atmosphere of a village where life is a continuous struggle against poverty and want. The language is replete with the local dialect of the region, and the poem is an important contribution to

Telugu poetry. But, at the end, the poet turns preacher and rails at the rich as being without heart or soul, as builders of their own prosperity on the bones and with the blood of the poor.

P. Sriramulu Reddi's renderings of the Tamil classics *Kamba Ramayanam* and *Silappadikaram* into flowing Telugu verse are of great value. They will bring the Tamils and Telugus closer to each other.

Significance attaches to two publications from Telangana. C. Narayana Reddi in his *Geya-Kavya*, *Nagarjuna Sagara*, gives beautiful poetic expression to the age-old conflict between Beauty and Truth, which essentially is a conflict between Love and Duty. Santi Sree is torn between her love for Padma Deva, the artist, and her duty to the Dharma. The conflict is not resolved. Padma Deva leaves Vijayapuri; and then, in a dream within a dream, Santi Sree sees a vision of Nagarjuna Sagar. The suggestion apparently is that the unfulfilled love of the lovers spread itself out as in a flood and took the shape of the Sagar. This is a great poem. Dasaradhi's *Mahandhrodayam* is a collection of poems instinct with the sentiment of patriotism. Young Dasaradhi must be regarded as the poet who dreamed of Visalandhra, and achieved a union of hearts even before the actual union of the States. Apart from patriotic verse, the volume contains lyrical poems like *Manjira*, *Madhuri* and *Poushalakshmi*.

The stage-play in Telugu is slowly emerging from the eclipse it suffered for some years on account of the cinema. The Amateur Dramatic Associations, consisting of students and other lovers of the drama, deserve credit for producing one-act prose plays as part of cultural functions. The full-length drama of previous decades, interspersed with verse and song, continues to attract audiences; but no new plays of the Puranic and historical variety are being written. As in poems and short stories, so too in the plays of today, there is a monotonous recurrence of themes—the poor peasant, the underpaid clerk, the woman finding refuge in houses of ill-fame, and notably the rickshawallah. The boy-meets-girl theme is not, however, so frequent in the play as in the short story. Some present-day writers of plays imagine that they must do propaganda for certain interests or for certain points of view. But they fail to realise that ideas can be conveyed by the sequence of events and the unfoldment of the plot, without a too obvious insistence on the motive of the play. Radio-plays as well

as stage-plays of merit have been produced recently. A senior writer, Mokkapati Narasimha Sastri, contributes a play *Anasvaram*. Here is a veiled reference to traditional Hindu society, which may yield to new forces and even absorb them but can never be shattered by them. *Rickshawallah*, a Radio-play by Bhattiprolu Krishnamurti, maintains a high level. It is the pathetic story of a rickshawallah being drawn to a tiny girl, who ultimately turns out to be his granddaughter. But the realisation comes too late for a family re-union. Arudra's *Salabhanjika* is a gentle criticism of the way a story is not allowed to develop itself, but is twisted at every turn by the actor, the musician, the poet and the producer. Another successful play is *Atithi* (The Guest) by Bellamkonda Ramadas. The dialogue as well as the action are remarkably subdued. This heightens the dramatic effect of the climax. The play is subtly ironical, for the hero, an idealist, is done to death by the very people whom he seeks to befriend.

The short story is the form of literature which is the most popular today. The dailies, the weeklies, and the high-class monthlies produce them by the hundred. But usually the quality is not up to mark. Apart from the repetition of themes, the Telugu prose of some of our present-day short stories is very unsatisfactory. This inattention to form and to literary technique may prove the ruin of the short story. Literary competitions occasionally throw up first-rate stories; and in the leading literary monthlies a high standard is maintained. *Bharati* by Tenneti Suri, *Suryodayam* by Kommuri Venugopala Rao, *Nirantaratrayam* by 'Buchi Babu', *Memu Mugguram* by Digumarti Rama Rao, and *Maripoyina Manishi* by V. Sita Devi are stories of quality in style and in technique. Special attention has to be invited to *Mayadari Chitralu*, the story of a connoisseur of art, rendered direct from the German of Stefan Zweig by Dr V. N. Sharma. Munimanikyam depicts Kantam, the heroine of his earlier stories, in her old age, ripe in wisdom and experience.

It is the field of literary and art criticism that one has to seek the best in Telugu writing today. Well-informed and beautifully expressed criticism of classical or contemporary literature and art, and the evaluation of theories of literary and artistic creation, may be read in our high-class monthlies and weeklies, and in the weekly supplements to the dailies. This is in continuation of the work of an earlier generation of scholars—Dr

C. R. Reddy, R. Anantakrishna Sarma and P. Lakshmi Kantam. V. V. L. Narasimha Rao compares the Telugu and the English novel with great insight. Pothukuchi Subrahmanya Sastri is the author of a series of brilliant articles on the Theories of Poetics and the Nature of Aesthetic Pleasure. P. Jagannadha Swami discusses the principles of creative art in his *Kalopasana*. Three little books, *Bharatiya Kala* by Dr C. Satyanarayana, *Grihalankarana* by G. Venkateswara Rao, and *Nagarjuna Konda* by Dr M. Rama Rao, constitute excellent introductions to the study of Indian sculpture and painting. They are all written in very lucid and elegant prose, and the printing and the production of art plates are a delight to the eye.

A welcome feature is the growth of interpretative criticism of the literature in other Indian languages. Karna Rajaseshagiri Rao's essay on the Hindi *Kamayani* of Jai Sankar Prasad, and Rahman's essay on Nazrul Islam, the Bengali poet, deserve special mention. If great literature is to be produced, and intelligently appraised, the principles of creative criticism have to be grasped . One feels grateful to the samll group of writers mentioned above for their valuable criticism.

Telugu has great and growing literature. The perfect blending of Sanskrit with Telugu invests it with the sweetness and beauty which made Tyagaraja's songs world-famous. When the history of the literature of the principal Indian languages, through many centuries of striving, comes to be written, Telugu will have an honoured place. The continuity of literary tradition, from the age of Nannaya to our own, has not been broken.

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URDU LITERATURE

KHWAJA AHMAD FARUQI

The Historical Background

The national upheaval of 1857 is an event of vast significance. The Mughal Empire was finished and the cultural values it had tried to foster during the three centuries of its rule had crumbled to dust. The British, with all the resources of the Industrial Revolution and the new sciences at their command, were firmly established in India and were free to exploit her for their own ends. The old, indigenous order was yielding place to a new and alien order which, however, was not devoid of progressive features and certain merits. It brought us closer to Western learning and sciences, and these have had their impact on our social life and mental attitude.

But the establishment of foreign imperialism led to a sharp conflict of British and Indian interests in the economic and political spheres. The revolt of 1857 was not an isolated event nor an accident of history. It was the result of accumulated discontent among the Indian people who suffered politically and culturally from the British conquest. It was not a mere military revolt but in the words of Dr Duff, 'a rebellion - revolution'. It was a 'dress rehearsal for the future struggle for freedom' and created a tradition for united movement. The social forces of the old society 'were vanquished in their final attempt at rehabilitating their power in 1857'. It was only after 1870 that new social forces emerged.

The Indian National Congress was founded in 1885. The period between 1870 and 1885 is marked by discontent among the agrarian population, the crippling of handicraft and artisan industries, a number of disastrous famines between 1867 and 1885, the Deccan peasant rising of 1875, and the steady growth of a nationalist press. The educated middle class intellectuals, fired by the war of Independence of the American people, by the story of the Italian struggle for national liberation from Austrian domination, by the works of Thomas Paine, Spencer, Mill and Voltaire and the lives of Garibaldi and Mazzini, were waking up and soon bacame politically articulate. These Indian leberals

played a progressive role, but the growing unemployment and disillusionment of the people gave an impetus to the growth of militant nationalism in India. During the period 1905 to 1918, the nationalist movement became militant and challenging and acquired a wider social basis. The first World War, the agitation for Home Rule and the post-war economic crisis sapped the foundations of British rule in India.

The enactment of the Rowlatt Act, the Martial Law regime in the Punjab and the Khilafat agitation enriched both in volume and content the stream of national discontent. The British Government took strong measures against political leaders. They banned Maulana Azad's *All-Hilal*, Maulana Muhammad Ali's *Comrade* and *Hamdard* and interned the distinguished leaders in 1915. Mahatma Gandhi enthusiastically supported the Khilafat agitation and started the famous Non-co-operation Movement in 1921. He dominated the scene of Indian politics till his last breath. Parallel to the national mass movements of 1930-34 and 1942 and World War II, the forces of communalism also gathered strength, resulting finally in the division of the country and the birth of Pakistan. Gandhiji 'offered his life-blood as a living oblation to the liquidation of communalism.'

The Literary Background

Urdu literature has been responsive to all these stages of national historical development. It embodies the psychological observations, the emotional experiences and even the whisperings of the people. To mirror life faithfully, it had to discuss the stultifying court traditions of the rose-and-the-nightingale school of gorgeous vocabulary, tawdry diction and stale imagery. This change came with the extinction of the kingdoms of Oudh (1856) and Delhi (1857) and the consolidation of British rule in India. Urdu literature could escape the influence of these events of far-reaching importance. All the stages of change—fierce conflict, morbid reaction and healthy synthesis—are clearly evinced here. Side by side with the old, a new and vigorous school of thought came into existence as a result of English education, the printing press and modern means of transport.

The first effective impact of British culture showed itself in a Delhi Urdu Revival in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Here an enthusiastic group set themselves to the task

of reproducing in Urdu the science and learning of the West. The old Delhi College, which was founded in 1825, brought about a scientific renaissance there. Scientific experiments held the students of Delhi College 'spell-bound' . . . They felt themselves to be the pioneers of a new age and dreamt dreams and saw visions. In 1844 a Vernacular Translation Society was established by Delhi College, which published books on scientific subjects. Prof Ram Chandra published two journals, *Mufidun Nazirin* and *Muhibbe Hind*, devoted mainly to the propagation of Western ideas and scientific values. In 1864, a Delhi Society was formed, its Secretary being Pyare Lal Ashob who later helped Azad (d. 1910) and Yali (d. 1914) in effecting a healthy change in Urdu literature.

The change, however, was not startling or rapid; it was a slow process suited to the genius of India. The pioneers were animated by a spirit of reform, not of revolt. They did not break away from the past completely; rather they reinterpreted the classical masters and placed them in a new light. Their main object was to give warmth and feeling to Urdu literature and make it more true to life. They avoided exaggerated westernization and condemned artificial insincerity, pompous imagery and exaggerated bombast.

The harbingers of the new movement were Azad and Hali. At the suggestion of Col Holroyd they started in 1874 poetical gatherings in which new types of poems were recited. Hali wrote *Barkharut*, *Ummeed*, *Insaf*, and *Hubbe Watan* which represent a new conscious trend in Urdu poetry. His 'mussaddas', written at the request of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, the Founder of the Aligarh Movement, is one of the greatest Urdu poems and has left mark on the era. Hali evaluated the old literature in the light of social consciousness and purposeful activity. He believed that if literature was to have any significance it must serve and reflect life. Great credit should be given to Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (d. 1898) who changed the very course of Urdu literature by his initiative, influence and reforming zeal. Contact with English literature melted the ice in Urdu which had accumulated owing to the frigid ardours of the Court. Old values were relegated to the background and literature was freed from its cumbersome shackles. Thus began a true renaissance in Urdu.

The seeds of the new movements can be found in the poems

of Sultan Quli Qutb Shah (d. 1611), the *Shahr Ashobs* of Mir (d. 1810) and Suda (d. 1780), the 'masnavis' of Mir Hasan (d. 1786), the 'marsias' of Anis (d. 1874), the poems of Nazir Akbarabadi (d. 1830) and the ghazals of Mirza Ghalib (d. 1869). Of the last it has been justly remarked that without Ghalib there would have been no Hali (d. 1914) and no Iqbal (d. 1938), the two pillars of modern Urdu poetry. But this literature is in the nature of a prelude. It needed the stimulus of western education to give it the throb of a new vitality.

The spirit of change pervaded every department of literature The old artificial poetry was on the wane. The traditional ghazal was found to be too restricted; its scope was broadened to include social and political themes. Poems were written on new subjects, inspired by nature and by love of country. Poets bacame conscious of their new responsibility and of the need of a sensitive and humane reaction to life. Conventional diction was avoided and new forms were employed which gave the poet a larger measure of freedom. In short, the reforming spirit and critical insight of Hali, the perspicacity of Ismail (d. 1897), the patriotic fervour of Durga Sahai Suroor (d. 1910), the golden verses of Akbar (d. 1921) strung with subtle satire and refined humour, facilitated the progress of the new movement. There was a flood of newspapers, journals and translations from western languages as well as creative writing on a variety of subjects.

The Urdu poetry of the period before World War I can be likened to a slow-moving river which had gathered fertile soil in its bed. Under the influence of the liberal movements of the late nineteenth century, the current of life too was moving somewhat slowly. Hali was the first to sing of India and to bewail her national decadence. His poetry was not longer divorced from life; rather it reflected its variegated hues and so established standards for subsequent writers. Poems on fresh themes became frequent, though they were mostly translations or adaptations. There were, however, many original poems too, full of sublime, patriotic thoughts and showing an almost feminine love of the country. The poets sing of starlit nights and budding flowers and chirping birds as though they had newly discovered their own land. The poems of Chakbast (d. 1926), Benazeer Shah (d. 1930), Suroor Jahanabadi (d. 1910), Waheeduddin Saleem (d. 1928), Shauq

Qidwai (d. 1928), Nazir and Nadir (d. 1912) clearly reflect the trends as they existed before 1914.

In the ghazal a slow change was taking place; Hali had broadened its scope and given it a social bias. He had repudiated the conventional and decorative diction and heralded the dawn of the new ghazal which combines thought with sentiment in the plainest possible language. Although Amir (d. 1900) and Dagh (d. 1904) still held sway with the people, the Urdu ghazal swung back sharply into the tradition and patterns of Mir and Ghalib, the classical masters of Urdu poetry. In Lucknow where Hali was decried for his reform, Mir and Ghalib had now set the tone for the ghazal. Saqib (d. 1869), Aziz (d. 1935) and Asar followed in the footsteps of the old masters and Hasrat Mohani (d. 1951) in those of Mushafi (d. 1824) and Naseem Dihlavi (d. 1843). The old compartments of Delhi and Lucknow were demolished and their styles were happily blended.

Iqbal rose with the mastery of genius and gave the ghazal a new turn. He discussed contemporary problems, cultural conflicts and social turmoils in the ghazal form which was originally meant to be a vehicle for love themes only. He was an ingenious adapter of traditional styles (such as Ghalib's) to his own ends. All the fundamental categories of his philosophy which form part of his emotional pattern are skilfully woven into the texture of his ghazal. With his poetic medley of great variety and tonal complexity and progressive social thinking, he has made the ghazal more meaningful and more fully expressive of life's problems.

Shad Azimabadi (d. 1927) combines the decorative features of Nasikh (d. 1883) with the pungent freshness, poignancy and music of Mir Riaz (d. 1934) and followed his instinct to escape from the harsh and painful aspects of life into the realm of wine poetry. Arzu has obviousness and boldness and employs 'the real language of people.' The peculiar strength of his style is its plainness of language and in this he represents a real and sound reform. Yas-o-Yagana shares the nervous sensitiveness of Ghalib whom he otherwise decries. He has neither the imagination of Ghalib which gives wings to words, nor his sunshine and insight which makes even sin look divine. Yet some of the verses of Yas are of the concentrated essence of poetry representing as they do his emotional egoism in a new tone. He ranks with Arzu, Aziz (d.

1835), Saqib, Safi, and Asar, who gave the Lucknow ghazal weighty and meaningful content.

Contemporary Trends in Poetry

Hasrat Mohani may be described as the greatest ghazal writer of modern India. He started his poetic career at a time when the atmosphere was full of the criticism made by Hali against the conventionality of the Lucknow ghazal. This criticism produced two opposite kinds of reaction. Azamatullah Khan (d. 1927) wanted 'to kill the ghazal in cold blood' as it had no unity of idea and no naturalness about it. Hasrat Mohani revitalized the Urdu ghazal and most cleverly blended the two styles of Delhi and Lucknow. Hasrat was an extremist and a revolutionary in every walk of life except in the domain of art. He has utilized all the old symbols and themes of the traditional ghazal and yet given to it a new tone and atmosphere . He bridges the past and the present and combines in his ghazal the vitality of the past, the awareness of the present and the possibilities of the future. His love themes are not stale and conventional; they are real, true and genuine. His lyricism has a domestic touch, an oriental flavour and a sober virility. Hasrat did not invent a new ghazal, he revived the old one. He is in line with Mushafi (d. 1824) and Momin (d. 1851), and combines their best elements to which he adds his fervent socio-political consciousness gained from actual experience. Hasrat has gone his own way and has found the right medium for his artistic impulse.

The ghazals of Fani are the sweetest because they tell of his saddest thoughts. He expresses the most exquisite sentiments with beauty, ardour and pathos. The extraordinary appeal of his ghazal lies in the passionate exaltation of his anguish and his perfect gift of phrasing. He is thoroughly sincere and expresses what he sees and feels. In pure poetry he excels all his contemporaries. His life is a story of long suffering and appalling maladjustments. With him the sentiment is almost uniformly of sadness, which is perhaps the source of his finest music. His tears rise 'from the depth of some divine despair', from a nostalgic longing for what is not. His 'world of thinking' is not narrow as it is often supposed to be.

Asghar (d. 1936) is deeply influenced by Ghalib and Momin. His thinking attitude has given a wider connotation to the ghazal.

His verses have a fastidious dilicacy and a lusciousness of imagery which give him a high place among the ghazal writers.

The lyrical power of Asar is extraordinarily versatile and he ranges through the whole gamut of human emotions with consummate felicity.

Jigar is pre-eminent as a ghazal writer. In sonorous cadence, delicate sensibility, mellow reflective wisdom and responsiveness to all modes and shades of feeling, he is perhaps incomparable. He is amazingly prolific in imagery and extraordinarily versatile in music and metre. The chief recoursè of his imagination is love and beauty. His vivid lyricism is marked by his delineation of the human soul, and by a delicious abandon and intoxicating feeling. He has wielded a great influence on youngsters who have tried with little success to ape his surface elegancies.

Firaq has drunk deep at the fountain of Western poetry and has assimilated its culture without prejudice to the oriental. His spiritual reaction to the problem of the day is characterized by love, courage and a revolutionary sentiment. He responds to each mood and situation with a sensuous awareness. His feeling is permeated with thought and his imagination has been enriched by his wide range of assimilated knowledge. But occasionally he suffers from a want of restraint.

The ghazals of Faiz are distinctive and moving. He borrows metaphors from a wide range of reference. His imaginative structure is spontaneous and natural in effect. He has been a political prisoner for a number of years. This life of imprisonment lends a peculiar charm to his symbolism and gives his verses a dreamy sweetness. Like Firaq, he is uneven and suffers from a sense of spiritual insecurity.

The ghazals of Jazbi aim at that free and natural expression of the emotional life towards which the poetry of sensibility has been striving. His pensive sadness makes his voice impressive and his appeal intense. To Ravish the world of beauty is an asylum but his thinking is weak and the style rather laboured. Majruh and Nadeem Qasimi and Akhturul Iman are ghazal poets of promise who are feeling their grounds.

During the years 1938-1946, the Urdu ghazal was subjected to most severe criticism, but it has survived the onslaught. That was a period of revolt and experimentation. Descriptive poems, sonnets, songs, blank verse and free verse were all attempted

and became more and more popular but the ghazal emerged triumphant from its temporary set-back. The publication of *Daste Saba* by Faiz is an event in the history of the ghazal. The partition of the country and the grim problems which it brought in its wake revived the popularity of ghazal, which is specially suitable for subjective moods. The frustration and anguish of the refugees and their nostalgic love for the lost values is clearly evinced in the ghazal of Sahir, Jagannath Azad, Arsh Malsiani, Mahrum, Harichand Akhtar, Hafeez Hoshyarpuri, Salik, Tabassum, Zaheer, Qatul, Nasir Kazim and many others. This poetry is occasionally loud and suffers from sentimentalism but it is not shoddy and has a ring of genuineness. It has unity of mood, tone and idea and represents a particular phase of Urdu ghazal.

The Urdu ghazals of today is different from its predecessor only in tone and emphasis. The poets no longer write about the waving locks, the down on the cheek, the mole on the face of the beloved. They express the 'voice of the soul' and refrain from profusion of ornament and over-elaboration of decorative features. The mystic element is on the wane and the study of man and the world is more in vogue. Unfortunately, a love for newness, a want of intellectual discipline and poor knowledge of the principles of verse have marred the charm and effect of the current ghazal, though in the hands of skilful poets it is still a vehicle of the highest poetry.

As regards other kinds of poems, Iqbal's *Khizre-rah*, written during the stormy days of 1914, is a landmark in modern Urdu poetry and a beacon light to later-day poets. Iqbal is a seer and a humanist who has pondered deeply over all the social, political and economic problems facing the East and examined them in the light of his Quranic ideology. By the Midas-touch of his genius, he turned to gold all that he worte and enlarged the frontiers of poetic expression by suggestiveness. The poems of *Bange Dara*, *Bale Jibreel* and *Zarbe Kaleem* ushered in a new era in Urdu and made it so rich that it could compare with any literature.

Josh Malihabadi is known as the Bard of Revolution. The two World Wars, the Non-co-operation Movement of 1921, the economic distress of 1929-30, the political disobedience movement of 1931, the conflict between labour and capital and the onrush

of socialist ideas have deeply influenced Urdu literature and produced a spirit of revolt. Josh symbolizes this revolt. But he is loud, shallow and very uneven. He has a turgid ardour which is sometimes in bad taste. He only touches the surface and hides his superficiality under a glittering cloak of polished diction. After Iqbal he has wielded the greatest influence on younger poets, to whom he is the 'Magian priest of revolutionary verse'. He is singularly happy in his similes and metaphors and can use them with charming effect in portraying familiar native scenery.

Zafar Ali Khan is a facile, prolific and skilful poet. But he has wasted his energy in depicting trivial subjects of ephemeral importance. Seemab is also a master of verse who wrote in haste but with confidence. The effect of his poetry is not commensurate with the importance of the themes he handled.

From Hali to Iqbal, Zafar Ali Khan, Ehsan and Mahir, Urdu 'nazm' has reached heights unknown before. Hafeez Jallundhari wrote *Shahnamah-i-Islam*, a long historical poem in imitation of Firdausi. In the Deccan, Nusrati (d. 1673) wrote *Alinama* and Rustami composed *Khawarnama*, which are the earliest specimens of narrative poetry in Urdu. But Hafeez Jallundhari's *Shahnamah-i-Islam* strikes the imagination with awe in its vastness and magnitude. He is, however, more successful in the first two volumes than in the third, where his poetic powers seem to have almost deserted him. He will also be remembered for his songs which are distinguished for their music and melody.

One of the most interesting manifestations of the current literary spirit is the production of songs in Urdu on the Hindi pattern, a kind of poetry which has a long history and which reflects more than anything else the composite and syncretic culture of India. Azmat-ullah Khan, Hafeez Jallundhari, Akhtar Sherani, Taseer, Khalid, Maqbool Ahamadpuri, Hafeez Hoshyarpuri, Saghar Nizami, Abid and Indarjit Sharma have written songs in choice and graceful Urdu, which have the fragrance of our intimate, domestic life. Shauq Qidwai, Arzu and Raza express the same sort of lyricism in the ghazal but it is in Azmatullah Khan that it finds its greatest intensity. There is about his songs an air of breathless stillness and an atmosphere of haunting vibrancy. Akhtar Shirani is the most distinguished exponent of romanticism; his work has pictorial quality, a rich-

ness of detail in setting and circumstance and a sensuous approach hitherto unknown in Urdu. He deserves a high place in poetry for his prodigal magnificence of imagery, material innovations and his boldness in the treatment of forbidden love themes.

In 1935 the 'progressive' movement was started with all the fanaticism and the propagandist zeal of a new crusade. It began by discarding the old shibboleths, but the new ones it adopted did not take firm root in the solid cultural soil of the country. The 'progressives' were scathingly critical of everything old and carried their experimentations to the limit of extravagance and their outspokenness to the verge of vulgarity. Miraji and Rashid, the pseudo-progressives, are instances in point. They sounded the trumpet tones of their ideology. Their verse was sensational but it lacked the concentration and intensity of high poetry. However, in spite of its exaggerated emphasis on a certain political ideology, the movement, when the first flush of enthusiasm was over, gave Urdu literature a vital stimulus, a new vigour and a liberating consciousness. Josh, Faiz, Firaq, Jazbi, Majaz, Makhdoom, Jan Nisar Akhtar and Sardar Jafri are some of its major spokesmen, who have an enduring vitality and a strong realism. They felt the challenge to reconstruct the social system and tried in their own way to find the panacea to India's ills. Read in selections, their verses are graceful as flowers in a vase. They are interesting as the impassioned expression of a protest against poverty, slavery and exploitation. From the year 1931 onwards there was a violent upsurge of the masses, and the working class struggled for the establishment of a socialist order. The 'progressive' poets portray this awakening . They certainly lack fulness and stability, but they are keen, aware and restless. They have opened the shutters and have invited us to lean out of the window.

Judged as a whole, the Urdu poetry of today is stimulating and fraught with immense possibilities. It has most faithfully mirrored our patriotic fervour, our secular and cosmopolitan outlook, our struggle for independence and against social and economic inequality, the anguish of the riot-torn country and the formidable problem of rehabilitation. The distress which came in the wake of partition is over. The wounds are healing and the bitterness subsiding. We have laid the foundations of a Welfare State and of a socialist pattern of society. We are also trying to

lay the foundations of a new aesthetic outlook by acquiring a deeper understanding of our own culture and of other cultures, past and present. The Urdu poet of today has a seriousness of purpose and a courage which will enable him to go ahead. With a range and reference that is at once wide and stimulating, he is trying to catch the vision of the New India. But to be effective he must maintain both that balance and that collaboration between emotion and intellect which is necessary for true creation in poetry, and must avoid the danger of being too obvious and platitudinous for contemporary taste.

The Short Story

The modern short story in Urdu can be said to begin with Prem Chand (1880-1936). Sensitive and thoughtful, he set forth in simple and graphic language significant episodes and intimate movements in the lives of the toiling millions. Niaz, Yaldram and L. Ahmed, on the other hand, had displayed much ingenuity in bypassing the real. Their laboured phantasy and romantic evasion of familiar reality had shown itself in nearly every writer of the period. It was Prem Chand who rescued the short story from the marsh of romanticism, to which the exotic efforts of Niaz and Yaldram had brought it, and, aided by the example of foreign masters such as Tchekov and Maupassant, placed it on a sure foundation. The 'progressive' movement also stimulated interest in short story writing, and after 1936 it emerged as one of the most important forms in contemporary literature. Prem Chand gave the Urdu short story a purposive direction and virtually reproduced in his stories the spiritual history of this tumultuous period.

Prem Chand (1880-1936) lapses into reformism but he has portrayed in realistic terms significant events and feelings in the lives of the people of his country. As a happy blend of art with life, his 'Kafan' (the Shroud) is the best example; it marks a turning point in the history of the Urdu short story. *Angare*, a collection of short stories by different writers, was published in 1935, and though proscribed, it greatly influenced the contemporary short story writers. But the most significant event was the establishment of the progressive Writers' Association in 1936, which marked a further stage in the development of the short story.

From 1936 to 1946, the Urdu short story echoes and re-echoes the manifesto of the 'Progressive' School. Husaini, Krishan Chandar, Bedi, Akhtar Ansari, Ahmad Ali, Ismat Chughtai, Hayatullah, Balwant Singh, Ahmed Nadim Qasmi, Hasan Askari, Ghulam Abbas, Mumtaz Sherin, Mumtaz Mufti, Ibrahim Jalis and Mantu have each in his or her own way, contributed to the development of the short story. Their imaginative energy breaks through all the dykes of customary form and style and has helped them to carve out new channels. They are concerned with the inner movements of impulse as much as with social and sociological problems. Ahmad Ali's 'Hamari Gali' (Our Lane), and 'Mera Kamra', (My Room), Krishan Chandar's 'Do Furlong Lambi Sarak' (A Road Two Furlong Long), Manu's 'Naya Qanoon', (The New Law), Hayatullah's 'Akhri Koshish' (The Last Attempt), and Bedi's 'Garm Kot' (A Warm Coat) are the best specimens in point. Here we find art and life artistically blended. Some stories, unfortunately, are adolescent in their appeal to the sex and are overbold and loud.

The stories of Mantu, Bedi, Krishan Chandar, Ismat, Hayatullah, Akhtar Orenavi, Ahmad Ali and others are important in that they cover a wide field and possess great variety and tonal complexity. Imagination and observation have been happily blended and this has proved a happy augury for the future. Ahmad Nadim Qasmi, Balwant Singh, Ghulam Abbas, Hijab Imtiaz, Mumtaz Mufti, Agha Babar, Ibrahim Jalies, Hajra Masrur, Saleha Abid Husain, Khadija Masroor, Mumtaz Sherin, Tasneem, Mahendra Nath, Suhail, Qurratul Ain and Shafiqur Rahaman emerged as leading short story writers who could record their observation of human nature with candidness and dramatic effect. But some stories in the hands of lesser artists abound in crude representation of sex obsession, sensationalism and sentimentality. The contribution of the 'Progressives' is such a jumble of good quality and trash that it needs a discerning critic to pick the grain from chaff.

The partition of the country in 1947 was a gruesome tragedy and brought in its wake untold misery and suffering to the millions who had to leave their homes and migrate to India or Pakistan. Some Urdu short story writers have depicted this tragedy with detached irony. Krishan Chandar's 'Ham Washshi

Hain' (We are Barbarians) is an intense appeal for sanity and toleration in which his lyrical humanism is clearly evinced, and the stories are artistically successful. Ismat, too, has written on the riots and the problems that came with them. Her stories entitled 'Sone ka Anda' (The Golden Egg) and 'Chauthi ka Jora' (Chauthi's Dress) are not without merit, though some of her stories, like some of Krishan Chandar's, are too obvious and loud. Ahmad Nadim is a skilful story writer and a conscientious realist. He has portrayed the inner movements of impulse and laid stress on human values. His point of view is more artistic than political and his stories are an interpretation of life through imagination and feeling. In 'Naya Farhad' (A new Farhad), 'Atishe Gul' (Fiery Blossom) and 'Alhamdo-lillah' (Praise be to God), he is sincere and stimulating and has a distinctive style of his own. Khwaja Ahmad Abbas is lively but has lapses similar to Krishna Chandar's and his stories with a political message show a marked falling off in creative power.

Among the budding short story writers mention may be made of Davendra Issar, Anwar Azeem, Ashfaq Ahmad, Zameeruddin Ibnul Hasan, Khaleel Ahmad, Shaukat Siddiqui, Anwar and Intizar Husain. They abound in technical devices for evoking the feel of living experience. They are bold in execution and realistic in representation . They offer the most readable examples of technical virtuosity in themes. They have tried to weave symbol and theme upon a groundwork of naturalistic detail. With a few deft strokes they make us feel those intangibles of moods that seem to defy the bondage of event and circumstances. The emphasis on the ugly is diminishing; these writers search the beautiful little sports in life and are concerned for the nuance in character and situation. As creative artists, they are not particularly remarkable, but they give us the spiritual history of the contemporary age, and seem to be emerging from the trance of a suspended faith.

The Novel

Urdu fiction is specially rich in 'Dastan' or Cycles of Legends, mostly translated from Persian and published by the famous Nawal Kishore Press of Lucknow. These supernatural stories usually deal with adventure, chivalry and love and are of extraordinary length. Here heroes of invincible courage and virtue

pass through dizzy series of adventures with fiends and sorcerers of inconceivable malice and cunning. After Nazir Ahmad (d. 1912), the Urdu novel made a real start with Pandit Ratan Nath Sarshar (d. 1902) who contributed in 1878 the first instalment of *Fisana -e-Azad* (The Exploits of Azad) to the columns of *Avadh Akhbar*. It is an immortal book which describes life in Lucknow in all its phases but does not idealize it. Abdul Halim Sharar's (d. 1926) periodical *Dilgudaz* also rendered useful service to the historical novel. Sharar is a novelist, historian, critic, essayist and journalist of no mean order. In spite of prolific output, he is eminently interesting. Mirza Hadi Rusva is famous for his *Umrao Jan Ada* , a novel in the form of the autobiography of a cultured dancing girl of Lucknow. Nazir Ahmad's Zahirdar Beg, Sarshar's Khoji, Rusva's Bismillah and Rashidul Khairi's Nani Ashshu are among the extremely interesting characters to be found in the Urdu novel and pulsate with life.

Prem Chand is a giant among novelists. He is realistic and can vividly portray the anguish of the down-trodden. In fact, he has given tongue to the 'dumb, driven cattle' and invested them with the grandeur of simple humanity. The economic struggle as well as the spiritual awakening of the Indian masses is clearly portrayed . He is a beacon light to short story writers and novelists. His novel, *Maiden-e-Amal* (Arena) is so different from the novels of Sharar, Rusva and Rashidul Khairi that it marks the beginning of the modern novel in Urdu. His *Gau-dan* (The Cow Offering) is a masterpiece. The life of rural people, vividly dramatized in novel form, has been presented with a wealth of variation never before reached in Urdu.

The 'progressive' movement concentrated more on the short stories than on novels. During the period 1936 to 1946, the short story continued to be the dominant art form. Only Krishna Chanda's *Sikast* (Defeat) can be classed as a readable though undistinguished novel.

Among the present day novelists of distinction, mention may be made of Ismat Chughtai, Aziz Ahmad, Qurratul Ain Haidar and Saliha Abid Husain. Ismat's *Tehri Lakir* (The Crooked Line), although not original in conception, is fresh in technique and presentation. She has given a closeup picture of a middle-class Muslim family and has studied sexual emotion in its social bearings. Aziz Ahmad's *Gurez* (Escape) is brilliantly written,

though many readers are repelled by the indelicacy and boldness with which sex matters are referred to in this novel. Aziz Ahmad's *Aisi Bulandi, Aisi Pasti* (Such Heights, Such Depths) and *Shabnam* (Dew) are also readable but nothing more.

Qurratul Ain Haider has produced two important novels, *Mery Bhe Sanam Khaney* and *Fasanae Ghame Dil* (The Story of the Sorrow of my Heart). She has tried to imitate James Joyce and has employed with occasional success the 'stream-of-consciousness' technique.

The novelists of today, with the solitary exception to Saliha Abid Husain, are devoid of faith. She is not dynamic or deep but has something to say. Ahsana Faruqi can be scathingly satirical of the shams of modern life. His *Ashnai* and *Shame Avadh* are fascinating but lack depth. Fiaz Ali's novels *Anwar* and *Shamim* have entertainment value. Few writers know better how to suit the public taste. Ramanand Sagar's novel, *Aur Insan Mar Gaya* (And the Man Died) captivates the reader from the first page and holds his interest to the end. It is a fascinating study of a sensitive soul, torn in tumult of the communal riots of 1947, and represents a firm and sturdy humanist approach to the mass madness of those gloomy days.

The Urdu novel is deficient in many ways. There are very few artists, nurtured by the great literature of the world, who can probe deeply into the complexities of the consciousness or give us the authentic 'feel' of living experience. Ahmad Ali, Krishan Chandar, Ismat, Aziz Ahmad, Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, Saliha Abid Husain, Qurratul Ain Haider, A. Hamid, Intizar Husain, Adil Rashid, Rashid Akhtar, Jamnadas and Shaukat Thanvi are novelists of talent and promise. On the whole, they are true to the humanist traditions of Urdu.

Pen-Portrait and Reportage

In drawing pen-portraits, the names of Farhatullah Beg, Rashid Ahmad Siddiqui, Qazi Abdul Ghaffar, Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi, Niaz Fatehpuri, Dr. Abid Husain and Khwaja Hasan Nizami are the most important. They weave a vast and colourful tapestry of Indian life and manners which is a delight to the reader.

Reportage is a new medium of expression in Urdu literature. Krishan Chandar's *Paudey* (Plants), *Subah Hoti Hai* (The Morn-

ing Dawns), Adil Rashid's *Khizan ke Phul* (Autumn Flowers), Fikr Taunsawi's *Chhata Darya* (The Sixth River), Tajwar Samir's *Jab Bandhan Tootay* (When the Bonds Broke) and Ibrahim Jalis's *Do Mulk, ek Kahant* (Two Countries with One Story) represent a triumph of journalism and indicate the firm humanist stand taken by Urdu writers in the midst of the mass hatred of the post-partition period.

DRAMA

The earliest drama extant in Urdu is *Inder Sabha* by Amanat, a musical comedy produced in the time of Wajid Ali Shah, the last king of Avadh. After his deposition in 1856, the Parsi Theatrical Companies catered for the amusement of the public. Muhammad Mian Raunaq Banarsi, Talib, and Ahsan Lakhnavi were the famous playwrights of these companies. Agha Hashr Kashmiri has been called the 'Marlowe of the Urdu.' Most of the dramas of this period are written in stiff and slow prose.

Urdu is sadly deficient in great dramas. Ishtiaq Hasain Qureshi, Saiyyid Imtiaz Ali Taj, Prof. Muhammad Mujib, Dr. Abid Husain, Ahmad Shuja, Shahid Ahmad Dehlavi, Abid Ali Abid, Fazal Haq Qureshi, Mirza Abid and Upendar Nath Ashk, Muhammed Husain, K. L. Kapur and Shaukat Thanvi have considerably extended the range of Urdu drama. With the independence of the country and assimilation of world culture, Urdu drama is growing up and trying to make up for its earlier deficiency. One-act plays and radio dramas are also popular. There is a crop of film dramas, but these are more a commentary on the public taste than a contribution to literature.

There is an intense urge to develop an Urdu theatre in India. The modern theatre is not indigenous. It is a growth of about a hundred years under the influence of the western stage. The surviving forms of popular theatre, the strolling players, the village-and-fair performers are in eclipse, although a serious endeavour is being made to preserve the ancient heritage. *Agra Bazar* by Habib Tanwir represents a happy blend of the old and new phases and is a pointer to a bright future for Urdu drama.

CRITICISM

In the sphere of critical writing and editing, the names of Dr

Abdul Haq, Prof Hamid Hasan Qadri, Niaz Fatehpuri, Sajjad Zahir, Dr. Abdullah, Prof. Kaleemuddin, Prof Masood Husain Rizvi, Majnu Gorakhpuri, Ibadat Barelavi, Firaq, Askari, and Mumtaz Husain stand out prominently. Prof Ale Ahmad Surur, and Saiyyid Ehtisham Husain are the most distinguished critics who view literature in all its social aspects and apply a scientific method to criticism. There has been a strong current of critical impressionism, supported by a theory of art for art's sake, but it is now at its lowest ebb. Among the literary historians, mention may be made of Mahmud Shirani, Ghulam Rasul Mehar, Hamid Hasan Qadri, Naseeruddin Hashmi, Abdus Salam Nadvi, Dr Ram Babu Saxena, Malik Ram, Wiqar Azeem, Tanha, Prof. Sarwari, Dr Zore and many others whose researches have brought to light new facts and corrected many errors. Some of them have often approached the known works with clinical detachment. Qazi Abdul Wadood, Imtiaz Ali Khan Arshi and Dr Abdus Sattar Siddiqi are the geologists of Urdu literature whose study lies among the fossil remnants of the past. The current decade has seen an abundance of critical writing which, if read in selections, is not devoid of seriousness and shows the complex interactions of literary criticism with contemporary history.

Humour and Satire

A distinctive feature of Urdu is that it has a rich crop of satirical literature. Imtiaz Ali Taj, Patras, Rashid Ahmad Siddiqui, Qazi Abdul Ghaffar, Dr Abid Husain, Kanhiyalal Kapoor and Shaukat Thanavi write with grace and an abundance of wit, and are highly resourceful in style.

Serious and Historical Literature

Of a large number of writers on scientific, religious, historical, educational and other serious subjects, only a few need be mentioned. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Dr. Abid Husain, Khwaja Ghulamus-Saiyidain, Dr Zakir Husain, Saiyyid Sulaiman Nadvi, Maulana Abdul Majid Darybadi, Niaz, Abul Hasan Ali, Shah Moinuddin, Zafar Husain, Said Ahmad, Hifzur Rahman, Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani, Manazir Ahsan Gilani, Khaliq Nizami, Maulana Ashraf Ali, Sabahuddin Abdur Rehaman and Maulana Moudoodi have produced a variety of serious

works, which are models of clarity, erudition, adaptation, or research.

LETTERS

Urdu is exceptionally rich in epistolary literature, which has a wide range and variety. Penned by important figures in our literary history, like Rajab Ali Beg Surur, Wajid Ali Shah, Mirza Ghalib, Hali, Shibli, Mehdi Ifadi and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, these letters give us a vivid glimpse of the drama of thought and emotions, lived out by these sensitive souls in the warm, intimate language of a personal dialogue. The letters of Niaz are like soap-bubbles, too wonderful to be touched. The letters of Maulvi Abdul Haq and Hamid Hasan Qadri are as informal and impromptu as their daily conversation and as candid and unpretentious as the writers themselves. Dr Iqbal and Saiyyid Sulaiman Nadvi dashed off their letters in the intervals of a multifarious literary activity, but they serve as an index to their minds. The letters of Maulana Azad, entitled *Ghubare Khatir*[1] were not dashed off in a hurry. They were given time to mature and were not despatched until every sentence had blossomed into a flower. In prison he spun out his letters like a silk worm and they exhibit delicacy of phrasing and flawless artistry. Sajjad Zahir also wrote letters in prison but they make rather dull and dismal reading. The letters of Safia Akhtar display extreme vitality and emotional intensity. The cumulative effect of her vigour and restraint acts upon the readers like a tonic or a sea-breeze. Her style is peculiar to herself.

In the troubled sea of Indian history, the present epoch stands out as an enchanted island of promise and hope and represents an important stage in the great upward movement of India. It has survived a night of storm and darkness. The Urdu literature of today reflects all these trends; it is compact of life and charm. Despite its imperfections, it is catholic, stimulating and humane and not unmindful of social obligations in the building up of the New India.

[1]A devanagari edition of this book, with a glossary, is being published by the Sahitya Akademi.—*Ed.*

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